

Filled and Overflowing

Romans 8:9-11

We have learned from Romans 8 the powerful Gospel truth that **we are IN CHRIST.**

- In Christ there is now no condemnation.
- The law of the Spirit of life has set you free IN CHRIST from the law of sin and death.
- We are no longer in the flesh but now live and walk and think IN THE SPIRIT.

We are no longer in the realm of the flesh, under the control and dominion of our sinful nature. We WERE in the world, in our sin, slaves justly condemned before God. But God. All because of His grace and through the work of Christ alone we have been forgiven and set free from sin. In Christ we stand before God not just forgiven but RIGHTEOUS – “dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne.”

To be IN CHRIST is to be UNITED WITH CHRIST. The believer becomes one with Jesus at the moment he bows the knee to Jesus as Lord and cries out to Him as Savior. All the other blessings – forgiveness, freedom and righteousness – are because of this union with Jesus. In Christ we have everything. Apart from Christ we have nothing but judgment and condemnation, suffering, slavery and death. That is ***the whirlpool of death*** God rescued us from that we talked about last week. But after being united with Christ we are swept up into ***the spiral of life*** in the Spirit.

That’s what we will talk about today as we get into verses 9-11. Listen again to verse 9.

“You, 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***. But if Christ is in you... the Spirit is life.” Romans 8:9,10**

We need to **feel the force of the “IF” in verse 9**. Be careful not to assume this because getting this right is THE most important thing in this short life – just like taking care of your engine is the most important thing with a car or boat.

I grew up water skiing and wake boarding a lot as a kid and teenager. When we did youth ministry we brought groups up to our family lake house all the time and taught kids how to ski. Up in the frozen north, in Wisconsin for example, you have to do this thing called “winterizing.” Winter is this time of the year when it gets really cold and when precipitation falls from the sky it turns white and builds up on the ground – it’s a really fascinating phenomena those in the North call “snow.” To winterize a boat you have to drain all the oil from the engine.

So when you put the boat back in for the spring, the first thing you have to do is fill it back up with oil. This is, of course, the most important part of starting the season. It’s more important than filling the tank with gas or washing the cobwebs off the life jackets or even getting the piers

in correctly. If you don't take care of the engine that boat isn't going to work and it certainly isn't going to pull skiers.

Some of you know where this is going. I was out pulling skiers for about an hour. Of course I was on the far side of the lake, not anywhere near our dock, when the engine started to sputter. I worked the throttle, wondering if we were running out of gas. I could tell we were losing power but I didn't know why. The skier was simply fading back into the water and the boat kept slowing down no matter how much I pressed the throttle lever forward.

And then ***the engine went "ba-boom,"*** and a big cloud of black smoke ballooned up. After a long swim and paddle back across the lake we pulled the boat out and eventually learned that we had refilled the engine with oil but we had forgotten one rather important step – putting in the drain plug. So the oil was in the boat, it just wasn't in the engine since it had gone right through. So the engine worked for about an hour and then it went "boom."

The most important thing with a boat is taking care of the engine. Mess up the engine, you wreck the boat. ***The most important thing in this life is making sure you belong to Jesus.*** "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Be sure you get this right. Don't gloss over verse 9. "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if IN FACT the Spirit of God dwells in you."

Feel that IF. Does the Spirit of God dwell in you? "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ DOES NOT BELONG TO HIM."

We often talk about "receiving Christ," or "accepting Christ." But I like this expression here – do you ***belong to Jesus?*** Are you HIS? Has HE received YOU? As important as it is to be clear about what you think of Jesus, it is infinitely and eternally more important ***what He thinks of you.***

So feel the "If" in verse 9. And IF you're not sure you belong to Jesus then make it your top priority to settle that question.

But IF you know that you do belong to Jesus then hear the two sides of the good news in this verse: **If you belong to Jesus, you are in the Spirit and the Spirit of God is in you.**

If you belong to Jesus

- You are IN THE SPIRIT
- The Spirit of God is IN YOU

"You, however, are not in the flesh but ***in the Spirit***, if in fact the Spirit of God ***dwells in you.***"

Romans 8:9

We've been talking for the last five weeks about what it means to be IN CHRIST and IN THE SPIRIT. We have a new position before God. If you belong to Jesus then you are no longer dead in sin but are now alive in Christ. If you belong to Jesus then you are no longer a slave of sin but are now free in Christ. If you belong to Jesus you are no longer under God's wrath but have been declared righteous in Christ.

That is the wonderful doctrine of our union with Christ and new life in the Spirit. But the other side is equally true. We are in Christ AND He is in us! You are in the Spirit and the Spirit of God is in you!

Look at the names that are given to the Holy Spirit here: "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," "Christ," "the Spirit." This is one of the plainest passages in the Bible that teaches us the Trinity. "You, 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. But if **Christ** is in you... **the Spirit** is life." Romans 8:9,10

The doctrine of the Trinity is hard to understand, but it is impossible to miss if you read the Bible closely, such as verses like these. "The Spirit of God" is presented in the next breath as "the Spirit of Christ," and in the breath after that as "Christ Himself." This doesn't mean God, the Spirit and Jesus are identical, since they retain separate names and personhood, but it does mean they are **unified and inseparable**. God is one. Yet God is three without compromising His unity.

It will break your brain if you think about it too much. The point for our purposes is that the Bible teaches that our God is Triune – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts IS the Spirit of God. He is the Spirit of Christ. Therefore to say the Holy Spirit lives in you is to say that GOD Himself lives in you.

We need to reclaim our doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we can make the mistake of dethroning the Spirit as if He is less than God. He is not less than God but is fully God and one with God just as Jesus is fully God and one with the Father. We fight for the full divinity of Jesus – and rightly so. But we must also fight for the full divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Only because of Jesus' finished work and only because we belong to Jesus, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit – all believers together and each of us separately. The shekinah glory of God, which was the visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, dwells in our hearts. We feel this reality when we gather together. We feel this reality when we sing God's praises together. We feel this reality when we pray together, when we open the Bible together, when we truly fellowship together by entering each other's lives to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn.

Ponder this for a moment. God. Lives. In. Me. God. The Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ dwells in my heart. He is with me right now. He is with me all the time. “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.” Be encouraged, brothers and sisters, by this wonderful truth. If you belong to Jesus, you are in the Spirit and the Spirit of God is in you!

There are many things the Holy Spirit does for us – teaching us, guiding us, convicting us of sin, reminding us of Jesus’ words, empowering us to witness. Let’s reflect now on what it means to have the Spirit in us, who fills us with life, light and love.

Last week we talked about our union and communion with Christ – once you come to Jesus in faith your UNION with Him is established forever, though your communion will fluctuate based on your commitment to the relationship. It’s like marriage – you are either married or not in terms of your union but your communion with your spouse will rise and fall with your success at loving and serving and respecting and honoring one another.

It is the same with the Holy Spirit. The moment you trusted in Christ you were baptized with the Holy Spirit and He came to live in your heart forever. Nothing can ever change that. Nothing will ever change that. But we are commanded in Ephesians 5 to “be filled with the Spirit” so that means that our experience of the fullness of the Spirit’s influence over us and His power through us will increase or decrease based on our relationship with Him.

So let’s look at what it means to be filled with the Spirit’s life, light and love and how we can increasingly walk in the fullness of the Spirit.

First,

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LIFE.

“But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Romans 8:10

Though our human bodies remain subject to death, the Holy Spirit connects us to the life of God to sustain us day to day as He will throughout eternity. Our bodies remain under the curse of sin that lies over this world because of Adam’s original sin. Your body, like mine and everyone else’s will die one day. But the Spirit of God IS LIFE. And we are connected to that life because of the righteousness of Christ that has been applied to our accounts. Apart from that righteousness – apart from being justified in Christ – not only our bodies would die, but our souls would also be under the curse of death. But because of Jesus’ righteousness we experience the Holy Spirit as life under His grace rather than as death under His judgment. Look at verse 11 -

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LIFE.

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” Romans 8:11

The life we can have in the Spirit is the same kind of life that raised Jesus from the dead! Even our mortal bodies, as weak and prone to sin as they are, can be filled with the resurrection power and life of God!

The Holy Spirit is to our souls what blood is to our bodies. The flesh – your old life of sin that was consumed with your self – is like a vampire that would drain the life from your soul; drain your power and vitality and strength in the Lord. This is why we need to be actively fighting sin. We are literally fighting for FULLNESS of life. The Devil's mission is to “steal and kill and destroy.” Jesus came to give LIFE and life in abundance. And He gives us that life through His Spirit who lives in our hearts.

Here's the idea – **the Holy Spirit is an overflowing fountain of life**, energy, goodness and joy. All I have is a pitcher full of water but I'd rather have a fire hose or Buckingham Fountain. Two things need to happen for us to live in the fullness of life the Holy Spirit can give us:

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LIFE

- We must place ourselves before Him
 - We must be quick to repent
1. We need to ***place ourselves before Him*** – tune our hearts to worship the Lord, love Him, listen to Him, be with Him.
 2. And second, we need to ***be quick to repent*** of any sin that would block our fellowship with Him. **Sin is like a lid on your cup.** Repent and forsake sin quickly to come back under the blessing of the Spirit.

And of course, we are not shiny, solid cups – we are more like bent, dented and a little bit ***soggy Dixie Cups***. So we need to come back to the Spirit for free refills throughout the day.

The Holy Spirit can and will fill us with life. But He does not do this automatically. We are commanded to “Be filled with the Spirit.” Ephesians 5:18 is a present, continuous command. “Keep being filled.” “Keep letting the Holy Spirit fill you up.” We are broken, leaky Dixie Cups since we still have these weak, mortal bodies and remaining sin in our hearts makes us prone to wander, taking ourselves out of the precious flow of the life of Jesus, and letting the vampire of the flesh drain the life, happiness and energy from us.

Second, **the Holy Spirit can fill us with LIGHT**. One of the Holy Spirit's main jobs on earth is to “Convict the world of sin.”

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LIGHT

“When he comes he will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.” John 16:8

The Holy Spirit has a powerful and focused flashlight to expose sin in our hearts and lives. You experienced this conviction of sin when you first became a Christian. The Holy Spirit showed you your sin with a very focused beam of light on a very specific area of sin. Sin is never vague or unspecific. It always has a name and a date. And you know it full well in your heart because that is the Holy Spirit's job and He does it perfectly, every time.

The Spirit showed you SOME of your sin, you felt guilty because the Spirit lit up that part of your life and you saw that you WERE guilty. The Spirit not only convicted you of your sin but also convinced you of God's righteousness to judge you and find you guilty. You knew that God was right and you were wrong – and that conviction is what led you to cry out to Jesus to save you and forgive you and take over the management of your life that you had been utterly failing to manage according to God's standards of righteousness.

The Holy Spirit, this side of heaven, never stops shining His light into the dark corners and closets of our lives. He is so patient and gracious that He doesn't bust out the huge painter's flood lights that He could and overwhelm us with His perfect holiness and shame us with a view of the full extent of our pride and selfishness and idolatry. No, He works systematically, identifying one or two areas at a time – you know what they are.

Two principles here:

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LIGHT

1. Respond quickly to the Spirit's conviction.
2. Don't try to be the Holy Spirit for someone else.

1. ***Respond quickly to the Spirit's conviction.*** If you delay or refuse to repent when He does show you an area of sin you will be stuck in your Christian growth. You will place a lid over your experience of the Holy Spirit's life and power and joy. This is what Ephesians 4 calls "grieving the Holy Spirit."

Take a moment right now and pray David's Psalm 139 pray, "Search me, Oh God... see if there is any wicked way in me." When He shows you something, quickly say, "Gracious heavenly Father, please forgive me for this specific area of sin and rebellion. I admit I have turned away from you and have failed to give you the wholehearted worship you deserve. Cleanse me from this sin and purify me by your Holy Spirit."

2. Second, ***don't try to be the Holy Spirit for someone else.*** The Spirit of God is the trained professional in this area – you are not. Even someone you know really well – like your husband or wife or your very best friend – you cannot know their deepest thoughts or intentions, you cannot know where the Holy Spirit is shining His light and you are very

likely to point out something that the Spirit hasn't yet brought into His light. Hear me on this: Don't be the Holy Spirit. It's not your job. Encourage. Speak truth. Love unconditionally. Be patient. Pray. Pray. Pray.

The other way the Holy Spirit uses His light is **to direct our steps**. Ask Him and He will show you what to say and when. Keep in step with the Spirit. Don't run ahead or lag behind. Be very cautious about pointing out sin in someone else's life. Remember what Jesus taught about the speck and the beam. If you think you see a speck of sin in someone else's life the very fact that you have noticed this sin in them probably indicates a much deeper and larger sin in YOU – perhaps the sin of pride and judgmentalism, which is right at the top of the list of things that God detests – “Haughty eyes.” Be very slow to look down on someone else with haughty eyes. Pray for them. Be patient. Trust the Holy Spirit to do His job.

Let me say a word to wives here who are married to men that are slow to change or even non-believers. Listen to 1 Peter 3:1

Wives, trust and obey:

“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.” 1 Peter 3:1

There is a command here – to be subject: submit. The context is clearly a man who “does NOT obey God's Word,” whether a flat out non-believer or an immature and slow-to-grow believer (maybe one who has gotten stuck himself on some area of responding to the Spirit's light). There is a command here but there is also a wonderful promise: **they may be won without a word**. That is the work of the Holy Spirit – not you.

Oh, like all of us, you will be sorely tempted to take matters into your own hands – to set the time frame and design the talking points. But listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through God's Word and trust in His promise. The BEST thing you can do for your husband is to SUBMIT to Him, to keep silent when it comes to his areas of weakness and sin and to remain always respectful and pure. That is how to WIN the game of marriage. It runs utterly counter to your every instinct – but that is often how it is with the kingdom of God. It's upside down.

Don't take the Holy Spirit's job. He is much better at it than you are. Trust Him. Talk with Him. Express your worries and fears and frustrations to HIM and you know what He will do? He will trade you – taking your worries and aggravation and giving you His Peace instead.

The Holy Spirit is the giver of LIFE and the giver of LIGHT.

I can't let the guys off the hook here. I am willing to bet that a lot of men in this room are stuck and have been for a long time. If you're taking the Momentum Bible Study I bet the Holy Spirit is

cranking up His light in a big way. But that light alone will not move you to change and start growing again unless you RESPOND to it. The Spirit WILL show you areas of your sin and idolatry. But you can't just leave it there. You HAVE TO RESPOND with true and sincere repentance.

Let's say that the Spirit has given you conviction about laziness and complacency with your spiritual life. He has shined His light onto your schedule and shown you that time with God is just a few minutes here and a few little prayers there. Everything else in your life has become more important than opening your Bible and stopping for five minutes to do nothing but hang out with God. You have plenty of time to read and watch the news, plenty of time for your work and hobbies. But you have let life crowd Jesus out of your schedule.

The word for that is IDOLATRY. You are not loving God with ALL OF YOUR HEART or even much of your heart.

Men, Identify and Destroy Idolatry

"But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you... For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Ephesians 5:3-5

The Biblical answer to idolatry is an act of destruction – tear down those altars. This is not a passive, "someone should probably do something about this" sort of deal. You must act. You must admit the sin and commit to change.

If you don't... If the Spirit is shining His light in this area and you ignore it or downplay it or delay... you will be stuck right there. And maybe you have been for years and years.

Maybe it's not that issue, maybe it's poor spending habits and impulse buying. Maybe it's low grade lust so that whenever an attractive woman walks by your eyes follow her a little too long. You don't go looking for things online or elsewhere, but when they walk right in front of you, you don't look away. That's called coveting your neighbor's wife or future wife. If the Spirit's light is right there and you do nothing, you don't share the struggle, you don't work to address it, you will be stuck right there – and maybe you have been for years.

This ties right into our final point.

The Holy Spirit can fill us with LOVE.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22

Of all the fruit that the Spirit can produce in our lives, the first one is LOVE. The most telling sign of the Spirit's light shining in your heart and his LIFE flowing through you is the sign of LOVE. Does that single word characterize you? Are you marked by the love of God?

Our Momentum Study reminds us of the promise, “Blessed are the MERCIFUL, for they shall receive mercy.” Matt. 5:7 Mercy is an attitude of compassion and understanding toward people that leads to forgiveness and a posture of grace toward people.

God took that posture toward you – to be merciful and compassionate and forgive you – the natural response to God’s love is to share that love with others.

One of the best examples of love in Christian history is **Hudson Taylor**.

- Born in England in 1832, the son of a Methodist lay-ministry, Taylor did not commit his life to Christ until the age of 17.
- Later that same year the Holy Spirit led Him to commit his life to foreign missions, specifically shining His light onto the needs in China.
- Taylor studied Greek, Hebrew, Latin and Chinese to prepare to share the Gospel with the Chinese.
- Beyond this he studied medicine so he could serve the needs of the Chinese.
- At the age of 20, having finished all of these studies, Hudson left England for the five month sailing trip to China. He was not received well in his first year of preaching, so he abandoned his British overcoat and began to dress like the native Chinese.
- In his third year of ministry all of his medical supplies were lost in a fire and he was later robbed of everything he owned.
- Pressing on, the year after these losses, Taylor and his missionary partner were joined by four Chinese workers. And the year after that Taylor married Maria Jane – together for XX years?
- In 1860 Taylor wrote these famous words:

“If I had a thousand pounds China should have it—if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Saviour?” Hudson Taylor

A few years later, back in England due to health problems and to establish a new mission society, Taylor wrote:

“Oh, for eloquence to plead the cause of China, for a pencil dipped in fire to paint the condition of this people.” Hudson Taylor

It was love that moved the heart of Hudson Taylor. The LIFE of the Holy Spirit filled his veins, which was the spiritual secret that propelled him on throughout all 50 years of his missionary life. The LIGHT of the Spirit empowered him to fight sin and pursue holiness:

“The Lord Jesus received is holiness begun; the Lord Jesus cherished is holiness advancing; the Lord Jesus counted upon as never absent would be holiness complete.” Henry Law *Christ is All*, pamphlet received prompting Taylor to say, “God has made me a new man!”

Taylor, greatly influenced by his mentor, George Mueller, trusted in the Spirit's leading and provision completely – never asking anyone for financial support, nor allowing the hundreds of missionaries that followed him to do so as that would be ***“inconsistent with the principle of entire dependence on God.”***

If you want an inspiring book that shows the connections between Mueller, Taylor and Spurgeon, read John Piper's *Camaraderie of Confidence*. The uniting thread between these three giants among men was their confidence in the sovereignty, goodness and love of God.

Hudson Taylor was a man filled up and overflowing with the life, light and love of the Holy Spirit. Taylor endured constant suffering and losses – losing five children at childbirth, burying his wife, Maria, after only 12 years together (m. 1858-1870), just a few days after their newborn son, Noel, passed away. In addition, he was often sick or injured himself. But his love for God and for the people of China, empowered by the Holy Spirit, kept him going for over 50 years of missionary service, founding China Inland Mission that ended up sending over 800 missionaries in his lifetime, who started 125 schools and more than 300 missionary stations resulting in 10s of thousands of converts.

I hope you don't hear that and think, “I could never be like that.” No. Listen to Romans 8:11 as we close:

“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.” Romans 8:13

That is our promise to claim! We have no power in ourselves, but the Holy Spirit can fill us with His LIFE, His LIGHT, His Love and power and joy and goodness and grace. Apart from Christ we can do nothing, but if we abide in Christ, if we walk in step with His Spirit, we will bear much fruit – all for the glory of God!

Let's pray that it will be so!

You, 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***.

10 But **if Christ is in you**,
although **the body is dead because of sin**,
the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 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.

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