

After the Spirit

Romans 8:1-9

- What does it mean to walk in the Spirit or to walk after the Spirit?
- The New Testament talks a lot about this concept
- And our passage of the day deals with it directly

- Every believer in Christ has the Holy Spirit living in them
- His disciples cannot have more of Him or less of Him at any given time
- But our submission to Him can, unfortunately, increase and decrease regularly

- To walk in Him is to live yielded to Him
- And this is a moment-by-moment proposition
- That means sinful actions and attitudes can break our connection with His will
- Instead of walking in the Spirit, at those moments, we are walking in the flesh

- I think Romans 8:1-9 is going to help us think about this correctly today
- As we approach the theme "After the Spirit"

- Our passage speaks, without any hesitation, about Christians being indwelt by the Holy Spirit
- The end of this section leaves no doubt, saying "if we don't have the Spirit, we are not His"
- Why then, does it also talk about walking in the flesh?
- How and why could we live by our own, natural desires, with the Spirit dwelling inside of us?

- It seems disciples of Christ often turn back to their old way of life
- But this is not the way it should be
- We are alive unto the Spirit
- And we ought to submit ourselves to Him daily - doing His will

- Let's start by talking about what salvation frees us from...

Romans 8:1

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

- Condemnation is what we deserve and what we will receive apart from Christ
- It is a condemnation because of sin
- Because we have missed the mark, violating God's law
- We are this way by nature and by choice

- But anyone who is in Christ Jesus, does not face this condemnation
- Faith in Jesus - and Him alone - saves men from eternal death in hell
- We are no longer living simply by the desires of our flesh
- But now have the Holy Spirit living inside
- And are passed from death unto life
- Made new in Him

- This is really good news
- It is spectacular news for anyone who hasn't heard
- But also a good and timely reminder to those who have
- Jesus has made it possible to escape an eternal death sentence
- But there is more to think about...

Romans 8:2

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

- There is a wonderful freedom in knowing Christ
- It is a freedom from law-keeping, which never saved any man
- And a freedom to serve God, released from the chains of sin
- It is true that the soul that sins shall die
- But it is also true that the blood of Christ washes away all sin
- And it's a good thing, because we could not have done it on our own...

Romans 8:3

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

- The law was set out before man, but it only did one thing
- It proved that men were sinful, weak in the flesh, and could not keep it
- God knew this was the case
- And so He sent His only son to earth
- To be born of a virgin
- To live a perfect life - the only One who could keep the law
- To die a death in our place and for our sins
- But then, also, to raise from the dead
- So that we could be offered new life in Him
- And we are offered that new life
- Not by keeping any law, but by trusting Him
- Knowing what He has done can save us, and embracing that - embracing Him as our own
- While we are still living in this flesh and in this sinful world
- There is a new power within us, if we believe
- His power
- The power of the Holy Spirit
- We've been made right before God by Christ
- Now we must walk in that right
- But only by the power of the Spirit...

Romans 8:4-5

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

- Verse 4 is restated in the ESV, I think, in a really helpful way...

"in 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."

- This is what I meant about being "made right"
- Jesus' righteousness has been imputed
- That means His righteousness is our righteousness
- This is how we are even capable of walking by His commands

- The ESV restatement of verse 5 is helpful too...

"For 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."

- This is a logical statement
- But it's easy to dismiss
- We often deceive ourselves into believing
- After setting our minds and hearts on fleshly things all week
- That we will somehow still manage to be living in a Spirit-led, Spirit-directed way

- But we must instead set our minds on things of the Spirit
- This is what it means to live after the Spirit

- What does that mean?
- God's word is obviously a big part of it
- Staying close to it
- Living according to it
- In relationship with Jesus
- In prayer
- In fellowship with other believers
- Accountable to them
- In the local church, which God has provided for us

- Living days committed to Him
- Choosing His will
- Not our own

- To walk after the Spirit
- This is the way

- This is why...

Romans 8:6-8

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

- Those that are carnally minded are minded toward the way of destruction
- Living as though they were on their way to eternal death
- The exact opposite is true for the spiritually minded
- Life and peace make up their disposition

- This is because the carnal mind is hostile toward God
- The carnal mind does not submit to God
- It cannot submit to God

- What does this mean
- It means a mind set only on things of this world
- Selfish desires
- My will, whatever it may be, not His

- Those that are living after the flesh are not pleasing God
- They cannot please God

- We understand and see this is the case for the lost
- But can we, His disciples, not return to carnal mindedness
- Certainly the Bible warns we must not

Romans 8:9

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

- We are not in the flesh
- Those who know Christ as Savior
- Those who are His
- Who have faith in Him

- We are of the Spirit
- Because the Spirit dwells within anyone who knows Him
- Therefore walk after the Spirit

- Because we know this
- Anyone who has not the Spirit of Christ
- Is none of His

- Walking in the Spirit
- A daily pursuit
- An hourly pursuit
- One that should be a focus for every disciple

Christopher Harper, Take Note 2024