

The Resurrection Of Jesus Creates Christians Who Are Spirit-Lived, Spirit-Minded, And Spirit-Guided.

Text: Rom 8:1-11

1) Spirit-Lived

Suggested Hymns:

2) Spirit-Minded

122, 344, 125, 376, 128

3) Spirit Guided

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Romans 8:1–11, *¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

³ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ 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, the things of the Spirit. 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, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹ But 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. (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

In the Gospel for today we heard about the story of the rich man and Lazarus.¹ It teaches us that there are two places — heaven and hell.

Scripture speaks of both as specific places, but these places cannot be identified with anything we know. We do however, know that hell is a place of torment, and that heaven is a place of bliss.

The greatest punishment of hell is in being forever separated from God. The greatest glory of heaven is being in God's presence in fullness of joy forevermore.

Hell is the place of actual suffering of torment and pain without hope of ever obtaining release, and certainly the punishments of hell are terrible beyond description. But even in hell there will be varying degrees of punishment; for those who heard but rejected the Gospel, the punishment is greater.²

So also in heaven, the greater degree of glory is given as a reward of grace, not of merit, to those who on earth showed their faith in consecrated service to the Lord and in many good works.³ All believers will enjoy equal bliss, for all will be in the presence of God. God has given us pictures of heaven in the visions of Daniel, Isaiah and John.

In summary, Heaven is a place of full and perfect happiness and this joy lasts forever. Hell is a place of great misery, which also lasts forever.

Today our text teaches us that *The Resurrection Of Jesus Creates Christians Who Are Spirit-Lived, Spirit-Minded, And Spirit-Guided*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Resurrection Of Jesus Creates Christians Who Are Spirit-Lived

Christians who are Spirit-lived are made alive by the Holy Spirit. The story of the rich man and Lazarus gets the cold shoulder and silent treatment in some churches. On occasion it fares even worse because some of our contemporaries have a hard time believing what Jesus taught about life beyond the grave.

Rank heresy about the afterlife has invaded and found room in all too many pulpits, where heaven and hell are described as "*psychological states of mind*" and they try desperately to laugh them right out of existence.

On the other hand, some people have sometimes invited criticism and ridicule by saying things about life beyond the grave that go far beyond what the Bible says. While we must always guard against subtracting and detracting from the Bible, we must also always be wary of adding to the Bible.

Our text tells us something about what happens after death but not nearly as much as some “*insiders*” claim to know. The Bible does not tell us as much as we may like to know about Paradise; but here in our text, in the middle of his discussion of the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians, the apostle Paul does tell us something about the life to come.

He assures us that through this same Holy Spirit of God the Father, He will someday give life to our dead bodies, just as life surged into Jesus’ dead body on Easter morning.

Our text says *if the Spirit of Him* (that is, God, the Father) *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.* This statement is set right in the middle of some straightforward words about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the individual Christian.

Note how the confession that we make in the Nicene Creed agrees with these verses,⁴ for there we say that we believe in the Holy Spirit “*who proceeds from the Father and the Son.*” We read in verse 9 of the *Spirit of Christ* and in verse 10 of the *Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead.*

Note also that although the term *triune God* does not occur in Scripture, here we have a clear reference to all three persons in the same sentence. This triune God is the giver of the future physical life that will be ours by a bodily resurrection to eternal life comparable to what the Father did for His Son on Easter morning. And all of this is possible because of *the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.*

Here, in Romans chapter 8, we have instruction, exhortation and encouragement in language that is very plain and simple. The apostle Paul, clearly says that God will give life to our mortal bodies.

This, then, is one of the many clear passages in the Bible that has given birth to the phrase in the Apostles' creed: "*I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.*" This is our hope. This is our confidence.

But how dare we cherish such hope? Are we good enough to expect God to raise us up and take us into heaven? Does God really want to have creatures like you and me around His throne? Yes, not because we are good enough, but because He loves us enough.

When we examine ourselves honestly, carefully, and penitently under the awful, penetrating light of His law, we see all kinds of blotches, smudges, and stains that make us absolutely ugly and downright repulsive.

Whenever we are inclined to wink at ourselves in the mirror and to think that maybe we are not as other people are, then Moses throws the book at us again. The book of the Law tells us that God wants to come first in our life, as we heard in the Old Testament lesson,⁵ but so often we have given Him a poor second.

Our heavenly Father wants us to hallow His name and to be a credit to His family, but so often we have shamed His name and disgraced Him. Time after time we have been selfish, proud and impatient.

Many of our words would have been better left unsaid. We are very patient with ourselves and proud enough to try to justify our own ways, but all the while we are so impatient with and critical of others.

Yet, ugly as we are — God loved and still loves us. Never forget it! We are hopeless on our own. We would never be able to claim a place in heaven. Yet, as Paul said two verses immediately preceding our text, ²⁴*O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* ²⁵*I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!*⁶

That is the very reason Jesus came down from heaven into this world of ours. We sinners would be hopelessly lost if left to ourselves. Paul wrote to the Romans, ²³*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*, and then continues, ²⁴*being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, ²⁵*whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith.*⁷ As our text puts it: "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*"

We learn in John 3:17 that *God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* This was God's way of fixing up ugly, sin-blemished people like you and me, and giving us the assurance of everlasting life in heaven.

We are taught in 1 Peter 3:18 that *Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*

We read in John 7:37-39, ³⁷ *On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*

But now since Jesus has finished His work and is glorified, the Holy Spirit can point us to His cross and to His open tomb and work faith in our hearts. Paul explains in our text that all Christians are in the Spirit and the Holy Spirit in them. Our text says, *Indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.* The Holy Spirit has given us spiritual life. He has given us faith in Christ.

The Holy Spirit has made our bodies to be His temple and put on them His very own stamp, His trademark. He has labelled them as His property to be held in trust until deliverance to their rightful Owner on the day of resurrection of all flesh. Therefore we might say that Christians are Spirit-lived people. They have been given eternal life by the gracious power of the Holy Spirit!

2. The Resurrection Of Jesus Creates Christians Who Are Spirit-Minded

If members of the holy Christian church are really Spirit-lived, they will also be Spirit-minded persons. Our text teaches us that *those who live according to the Spirit, [set their minds on] the things of the Spirit.*

As a flower turns to the sunlight, those who are in Christ will turn their hearts and minds toward God and His Sun of Righteousness.

But so often we become trapped and strapped by the things of this world that we really do not set our minds on the things of the Spirit. We may talk piously

about them, but our lives give the lie to our words. The things that are really big and important to us are the home we own, the person we choose to marry, the children we raise, the job we have, and the hobbies we pursue.

Now make no mistake about this: goods, job, child, and wife — these are important. But so are the things of the Kingdom. God did not say: First make your wife happy, then seek the Kingdom. First pay off your mortgage, then seek the Kingdom. First educate your children, then take whatever time and money is left for the Kingdom. He did not even say: First get a job that will pay you well, so that you can give financial support to the Kingdom.

No, the King of heaven and Owner of all, who for our sakes became poor tells us, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”*⁸

Now, such Kingdom seeking leaves plenty of room for goods, job, child, and wife, but not first place. Even so, some people are guilty of near idolatry of their children, spouse, or parents. Not so the person who is Spirit-minded. He will have a mind to give God first place in his life, even ahead of goods, job, child, and wife.

Some of us may need to loosen our clutch on the things that do not last for eternity — our fascination with our mortgaged homes, the near idolatry of our children, our selfish drive for money and success and prestige and status. These are things you cannot take with you.

Especially we, who live in a land in which God has provided such material wealth and bounty, need to remember who the Giver is and what He expects us to do with His gifts. These are thoughts that deserve priority in our hearts and minds. To give the things of the Holy Spirit their rightful place and keep life in balance, it may be necessary to loosen our grip on things that do not matter at the end.

God, the Holy Spirit, through Paul puts it very bluntly in our text, *“⁶For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* How about you, Spirit-lived Christian, are you keeping and pondering the right things in your heart?

3. The Resurrection Of Jesus Creates Christians Who Are Spirit-Guided

Well, if you are Spirit-minded, you will also be Spirit-guided. This simply means that your life will give evidence of the faith that is in your heart.

Just in case you do not know exactly what kinds of fruit you ought to be growing on the tree of your life, it will help you to recall what Paul once said in his Letter to the Galatians: ***“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control.”***⁹ We should also bear in mind the words of today’s Epistle ***“that he who loves God must love his brother also.”***¹⁰

Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives will have results, not only in heaven, but also in the here and now. It certainly has to do with the life to come, but not exclusively.

Our certain hope in Jesus Christ for heaven will have a definite and positive effect on our lives in this world. Let us demonstrate the fruits of the life-giving Spirit not only in word and in tongue but in deed and truth. We will show by our whole way of life that people who are Spirit-lived are also Spirit-minded and Spirit-guided.

May He who is the Resurrection and the Life, your Way and your Truth, strengthen and enable you to keep pondering the right things in your heart and to keep following the Holy Spirit’s leading through His eternal Word. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Luke 16:19-31

² What Do Lutherans Believe? Walter P. Snyder, 1994, “The Last Things?” no. 8, p50

³ *Luther’s Small Catechism*, Koehler, 1981, Q197, The Life Everlasting, p219

⁴ Romans 8:9, 11, *Spirit of Christ, Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead*

⁵ Deut 6:4-13

⁶ Romans 7:24-25

⁷ Romans 3:23-25

⁸ Matt. 6:33

⁹ Gal. 5:22-23

¹⁰ 1 John 4:21