



E6. The Eternal Purpose of God: The Holy Spirit

Rm. 8.9-11 -- *“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. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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.”*

In reading this passage we can clarify our understanding of the Holy Spirit. Yes, He is a part of the trinity of God being fully God but distinct in personality and function. Yet, what this passage reveals is the “unity” of the Spirit with man and with God. Note first of all the Holy Spirit is “*the Spirit of God*” (the Father), and then the scripture proclaims that the Holy Spirit is the “*Spirit of Christ*,” and then the scripture equates the Holy Spirit with Christ, “*if Christ is in you*,” and finally by the grace of God this same Holy Spirit is “*His Spirit who dwells in you*.” And finally note the bold and ominous disclosure, “*Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*” Salvation of man hinges on his possession of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus made this perfectly clear to Nicodemus, leaving no doubt that salvation comes by no other means than by the possession of the Holy Spirit, without which one cannot even see the Kingdom of God let alone enter it. Jn. 3.3,5-8,

*“Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone **who is born of the Spirit.**”*

Undeniably, the promise of eternal life has no part in cries of sorrow, confessions of faith, the sprinkling of water, sacrifices, or religious commitment; simply, “*Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*” Being born again of the Spirit of Christ is quintessential to salvation. One...must...be...born...again...of...the...Spirit...of...God!

Jesus likens the Spirit to the wind, for like the wind, it is invisible. Yet the wind is powerful; it can uproot trees, lift houses off their foundations, carry ships across the seas, and sand blast solid rock sculpturing it into various shapes and forms. In like manner, though invisible, the indwelling Spirit is powerful to the affecting of one’s soul.

The Spirit of Life

God is life, and He imparts His life to us by sharing His Spirit. This life is not mere vitality, for what is life, even eternal life, without “experiencing” relationships. Whether it is physical or spiritual, life is to be experienced—this means the mind of the soul must be engaged in it.

Life is having sensible interactions; for example, eating a fine meal is satisfying, watching the sun set is tranquil, receiving a hug from your child is an inner warmth, a subtle sensing to be a witness of Christ to someone is compelling, the prompting to pray for someone or some situation is sensing a burden, and the inner conviction of wrong doing pricks the conscience. This is life, it is living, it is interacting, it is experiencing. It is written in Rm. 8.2,

*“For the law of the **Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”*

The law of the Spirit of life— The believer does not receive the Holy Spirit apart from Christ. A lamp cannot continue to burn unless its wick is drawing up oil from a reservoir, and a branch cannot stay alive and bear fruit unless it draws its essence of life from the vine upon which it is attached; no one has spiritual life not in union with Christ. It is only when one is “in Christ” that one may have a share in His Spirit; and that presence of the Spirit in our lives is operative, it does a work in us. We must first **believe** in Christ and then **receive** the Spirit of Christ. The presence of the Spirit in our lives is actually a law written on the mind and put into our hearts and a power operating within. The result of that law and power is a new life, an inner spiritual vitality that includes within itself a pledge of immortality, i.e., eternal life.

*Eph. 1.13-14 – “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed** with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

As a king would put his royal seal upon an important document to show that it comes with his authority, and there is no higher power, the seal of God of the Holy Spirit upon us is our guarantee by God not only of our eternal inheritance to come, but also of the resurrection of these bodies at His coming. Nothing in heaven or on earth or under the earth can violate or break that seal; it can only be rejected in favor of earthly pursuits.

The Spirit also carries within itself a “moral compass” enabling one to judge in a Godly manner good and evil and to submissively act accordingly. The Spirit of Life is a power within enabling one to reject and overcome sin, darkness and death, and to do those things pleasing to God. As it is written,

Phil. 2.12-13 – “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Do you see that in this short passage of scripture focusing on the clause “*God who works in you,*” is being applied to the divine operation of salvation working in the soul of man, working to align our will with the will of God, thereby walking in righteousness—righteousness is simply walking in the right direction under the guidance of God. As we presently look back to the salvation of our spirit at the new birth, and we look forward to the salvation of our bodies in the resurrection at His coming, we now anticipate the salvation of our souls as we are progressively being changed from one level of glory to the next level of glory.

Please note, it is not written that God wills and does **for** us; it cannot be because He does not compel or force us against our will. It is we that *will and do*, though God influences and leads us. Man has a free will to exercise as he wishes, as to even today, to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil or to eat of the Tree of Life. Thus, God does not compel or force us, or that we are no longer “free agents,” but only that God *works in us to will and to do*. God merely comes to us as an aid to overcome the powers of evil and self-determination, by enlightening and enabling us to follow after the light and life of God. This is what is meant by Rm. 8.13-14,

“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

These are the sons of God—meaning, they are no longer children, weak and easily swayed, but are now mature sons and daughters, *led by the Spirit of God*, willing and doing the will of God, walking in righteousness. There is a new sense of freedom as “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” has “*has made me free from the law of sin and death,*” we no longer try to conform our lives to the standard of the law and commandments; but the guidance comes from within.

From the law of sin and death—Understanding this is the enablement to see just how powerful the *Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* actually works in us. You see, there is another law that works in direct contrast with the *law of the Spirit of life*—it is *the law of sin and death*. The word “sin” can mean either the immoral act that we do, as we commit sins, but also the word “sin” can refer to the present power that works within us, persuading and enticing us to act in ungodly or unrighteous ways.

Paul acknowledges this in Rm. 7.23 when he writes, “*But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*” The power of sin is the corrupting element in our human nature, something we inherited from Adam. It is a power that acts upon our souls; it urges us to act out of selfish compulsion and to do things contrary to the righteous law of the Spirit. It wars against us. The result of sin reigning is death, spiritual death.

And so, it is by faith that believers declare, “*the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*” What religious laws and commandments could not do, as they could not overcome the power of sin, the *law of the Spirit of life* could and will do. Listen closely to the verses following Rm. 8.2,

“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, 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. 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. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Rm. 8.3-8

The work of the salvation of the soul is such that we are unable to do it ourselves, regardless of the strength of our determination and will power; we need help as only can be imparted by the *Spirit of Life*.

Sin, as a law, is a constant; it is like the law of gravity; it is always present, enticing, drawing, pulling upon us to act according to the flesh. (By the way, the term “flesh” refers to the combined working of the soul and body of man having no influence of the regenerated spirit.) With the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit we are enabled to overcome this menacing law of sin and to give us a heart of true repentance—as sin becomes increasingly distasteful; it enables us to break from the bad influences of certain companions while connecting us with positive brothers and sisters in Christ; it awakens us to give up immoral and wicked plans and to focus to set our minds on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Col. 3.1).

This *Spirit of Life* enables our minds to be open to be enlightened, that we may distinguish truth from false, light from darkness, the real from the imitation. It will keep us stable, not sliding back into old ways, habits, and transgressions. In other words, the *Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* breaks the chains that have bound us all our lives and sets us free to live our new lives in Christ.

There are certain Christian denominations closely bound to legalism that call for an excessive adherence to Old Testament laws and commandments. This religion is very binding. Jesus once spoke of the religious sect of the Pharisees in Mt. 16.6, “*Then Jesus said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.’*” Leaven is a yeast that infiltrates bread, filling it with empty air bubbles. The doctrines the Pharisees taught were a mix of commandments of men who added their own sense of morality to the Law, the tradition of its elders, and of justification before God by keeping the Law. It was a religion of works, pure and simple.

I once knew a man, a very close brother in Christ, who was bound all his life with religious legalism, trying to conform himself to doctrines, laws and commandments, only to repeatedly fail over and over again. But then one day he discovered the reality of the *Spirit of life in Christ Jesus* and immediate freedom came upon his soul. The bonds of legalism and religion fell from him; “I am free,” he would say, “I am free.” Where legalism imposes from above and upon you, the *spirit of Life* rises up from within you, just as Jesus declared in Jn. 7.38-39,

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive;”

So we can see the importance of the Holy Spirit, that He is central to our having any kind of a direct relationship with God our Father and Lord. The initial salvation made possible by the crucifixion of Christ is now facilitated through the operation of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is through this Spirit of life we have power over our human nature. The Holy Spirit is the one sent by God to be our resident counselor, comforter, advocate, helper, and source of truth and life, life now and eternal.

Our Inheritance

As for our inheritance, what more can we ask for than the very presence of God, as the Spirit of Life, **in** us; not around us, or with us, or upon us, but **within** us. His presence will never diminish but only become more glorifying over time. He is the seal of God upon us, and the guarantee of our inheritance to come. This absolute guarantee is verified in Eph. 1.13-14; let’s return to this scripture once again and read it for further insight,

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Being “sealed” with the Holy Spirit of promise. The sepulcher in which Jesus was laid following His crucifixion was said to be sealed with a large stone to the entrance. Not only was the large stone set as a seal so that it could not be removed physically without much effort, it is also thought to have the seal of Pilate on the stone, made by pouring wax on the stone and an impression made in the wax by pressing into it with the royal signet, or engraved ring. This royal seal was more powerful than the stone itself, for it meant the authority of the Roman empire barred the entrance to the burial plot. It also meant certain death to anyone attempting to break the seal.

In Rev. 5.1 John saw a large scroll which contained a grand culmination of all the plans and purposes of God for His creation. This scroll was *sealed* with seven *seals*—meaning the impression on each of the seven waxes was made by the signet of God, and no one without His authorization could break the seal. “*Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll,*” came the cry from a mighty angel. No one in heaven or earth was able to break the seals; no one but the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

We are *sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, the signet of God is upon us, and no one, no authority, no power, no mighty angel, dare break this seal and incur the wrath of Almighty God. This seal is the absolute *guarantee of our inheritance*. The verse concludes,

Until the redemption of the purchased possession. The final glorious event that culminates our salvation, bringing it to full completion, is the resurrection of our bodies. Paul writes in Rm. 8.23 “*we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*” It was never the intent of God for man to be one dimensional in relationship as spiritual angels, but to be two dimensional in relationship having interaction with both the spiritual and the physical environments. Thus, in a *new heaven and new earth* we will be able to be fully engaged to the spiritual presence of God in His eternal Kingdom, and to appreciate the environment of the *new earth, wherein righteousness dwells*. (2 Pet. 3.13, Rev. 21.1)

Inheritance of the Holy Spirit

The Lord’s Prayer begins, “*Our Father who art in heaven...*” makes clear the abode of God...in heaven. To God, heaven is His throne and earth but His footstool. He does not dwell in things His hand has made, that are apart as His creation. No building could house Him, no mountain could hold Him, He is above all creation. However, the role of the Holy Spirit, His function and purpose in creation, is to bring the presence of God into His creation; to give a sense of His presence in the midst of His people.

When Moses’ tabernacle was complete, the Spirit of God filled the sanctuary with His presence. When Solomon’s temple was complete, the glory of God filled the sanctuary with glory. Today, in this present age, no longer are temples or cathedrals the object of the Spirit’s presence, but now, under the New Covenant of Christ, He dwells in His people, collectively

known as the Church, or the Body of Christ. It is the Church that has become the spiritual temple of the Holy Spirit, to a glory far exceeding anything of the past. As it is written in 1 Cor. 3.16:

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” 1 Cor. 3.16

In this verse, the pronoun “you” is second person plural, meaning the Church collectively; as the gathering together of a body of believers. Carefully understand the significance of this as written in Eph. 2.19-22.

*“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom **you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**”*

Knowing the truth of His indwelling presence, no gathering should ever be the same again; as we must consider the presence of Almighty God in our midst, and reflect upon His blessing with which He has blessed us, just who He is, what are His intentions for the Church, and how *He works in us to will and do of His good pleasure.* (Phil. 2.13) This fellowship between the Church and the Holy Spirit will grow in this age and will consummate in wholeness and fullness in the age to come as the Bride of Christ—the Holy Spirit continuing to be the uniting bond between Christ and the Church, now becoming the Bride. A “church” without being cognizant of these things is termed religion, being simply the professing of certain beliefs and the practice of certain rituals.

But the importance of the indwelling Spirit does not stop with the concept of being in the midst of a people but also must include His presence “in” each believer. Take for example, Gal 2.20, which reads,

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;”

Every pronoun of “I” and “me” are first person singular, meaning the individual is the temple of the Holy Spirit as well. God, by way of His Spirit, takes up His residence in each and every believer who believes and receives Him into their hearts. Our lives must now be wrapped around the realization of this magnificent *mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope* (the anticipation, the expectation) *of glory.* (Col. 1.27)

So, do you see now how all dispensations of past ages have prefigured and pointed to the spiritual fulfillment in the Church today, and the Church itself is determined to be consummated by God achieving His eternal purpose at the return of Christ; at which time the Father will have a family of many sons and daughters, the Son will have a bride to reign with Him in His Kingdom, and the Holy Spirit will have a holy dwelling place in the saints. We, the believers, will be the beneficiaries and active participants of that great inheritance. God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is our great inheritance; and unimaginably, but profoundly, we are His inheritance.

The Holy Spirit and Communion

In the previous messages I addressed the role of the Father and the Son in the breaking of Bread, taking this practice to be most sober and holy. The only remark I wish to make concerns the promise of Jesus in Mt.18.20 where He says,

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

This promise is fulfilled with the presence of the Holy Spirit. With this understanding we must be very sober and humble in honoring His presence with a gentle spirit and submissive heart, with praise and thanksgiving, for in Christ *we have been made accepted, and have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.* (Eph. 1.3,6) Amen