



## Walking in the Spirit Romans 8:5-17

When I was young, our house was close to a railway line and therefore I grew up with an interest in railways. I got particularly interested in exploring disused railways – mostly because you can't get run over by a train on a disused track and it is sometimes interesting to try and discover where the railways went when they have almost disappeared.

When we moved to London, I found that London was a railway buff's paradise because of the huge range of railways, new, old and disused in the capital. The Underground is quite an amazing subterranean world to explore and believe it or not, London Underground actually do tours of disused stations and tunnels for enthusiasts. Without a guide you could get seriously lost. In fact tourists do get hopelessly lost in the bulk of the underground that are for public use.

When I was a teenager, my church used to do barbecues in the country around Cardiff and one time there was a disused railway called the Barry Railway nearby so I encouraged a few to go exploring for it. We soon found a tunnel which had been half walled up but it was easy to climb over and walk down the tunnel. So we started out, but a couple of the girls got rather nervous about walking through the tunnel and I was the only boy bold enough to hold the girl's hands and walk them through!

Last week we saw how we have a God who makes His will known to us. And if we desire to be His people, then we are called to obey Him. God makes His will known to us in two fundamental ways, through His word, the Bible and by His Spirit. I talked a little about the importance of knowing God's word because in it we find out all that we need to live lives that honour Him.

God also leads us by His Spirit because He has a particular will for each of us as He desired every part of our lives to be under His control. The Holy Spirit reveals God's particular will for us. A basic principle of guidance by the Holy Spirit is that the Spirit guides in accordance with God's revealed word. Therefore God's Spirit always leads us into that which builds us up. We'll never be guided into doing anything else.

Take a look at Galatians 5:24-25 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (NIV)*

If we're Christians, we don't want to walk in a way which dishonours God. How do we walk – with the Spirit alongside us as we walk through the dark tunnel that is this world – and He's right there, ready to hold our hands and lead us through. We have to walk with Him, keep in step with Him. In Romans, Paul describes it as living by the Spirit in Romans 8. So what is living by the Spirit about?

### ➡ Life in the Spirit is transforming

I think there are just some mind-boggling truths here. The Holy Spirit changes lives. I know even in the Church that there are people who have had their lives transformed when they trusted Christ. Who does that? The Holy Spirit as He comes into our lives. So what does he do?

### ➡ He empowers us to live in a new way

Roma 8:5 (TEV) Those who live as their human nature tells them to, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. 6 To be controlled by human nature results in death; to be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. 7 And so people become enemies of God when they are controlled by their human nature; for they do not obey God's law, and in fact they cannot obey it. 8 Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.

The Holy Spirit takes who we naturally are and makes us able to do all the things that naturally we could not do. That includes just simply knowing God, understanding the things of God and having spiritual judgement. Look at this verse from 1 Corinthians:

*1Cor 2:13 (TEV) So then, we do not speak in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, as we explain spiritual truths to those who have the Spirit. 14 Whoever does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God's Spirit. Such a person really does not understand them, and they seem to be nonsense, because their value can be judged only on a spiritual basis. 15 Whoever has the Spirit, however, is able to judge the value of everything, but no one is able to judge him.*

How do you know anything about God? By the Holy Spirit! But He's does more than that – He empowers our lives so that we can live in a way that pleases God. So often we try to be like Jesus in our own strength don't we? We know what God wants for our lives but we fail? Whether the issues are forgiveness, overcoming a compulsion, dealing with illness, being careful in what we say, dealing with someone with compassion – when we try to deal with these issues ourselves – in the flesh – we fail. Paul said Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.

Yet the Spirit is life transforming because He does empower us to change – but to do that we must have our minds controlled by Him - Those who live as the Spirit tells them to, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants. Not just a bit and as we'd like it, but allowing Him to take control. It's one thing to want the Spirit to walk with us, but it's quite another to allow the Spirit to take our hands and do the leading.

Do you need Him to deal with your life this morning - forgiveness, overcoming a compulsion, dealing with illness, being careful in what we say, dealing with someone with compassion. Ask Him for that empowering to do so.

➔ He indwells us

*9 But you do not live as your human nature tells you to; instead, you live as the Spirit tells you to--if, in fact, God's Spirit lives in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*

Amazing this verse isn't it. If you are a believer this morning, God's Spirit lives in you. You can't be a true believer without Him. That's what Romans 8:9 means. But think on it – the great Creator God – He lives in me and in all who follow Jesus. Now doesn't that humble us. Shouldn't that drive us to want Him to change us. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, break me, melt me, mould me, fill me!

➔ He brings us new life in Christ

*10 But if Christ lives in you, the Spirit is life for you because you have been put right with God, even though your bodies are going to die because of sin. 11 If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, then he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.*

This follows on from what I just said. The Holy Spirit makes us alive in Christ. Yes, our bodies may die, but we live on. That's the amazing hope of the Christian. How do we know that's true – because the life-changing Spirit in us is living proof of it.

Do you have that eternal hope in you this morning. If you've never trusted Jesus before, you know and I know that you have no hope. Don't go on living in denial, let the Holy Spirit open your mind to the things of God and accept Jesus as your Saviour and Lord.

➔ Life in the Spirit is an obligation for Christians

*12 So then, my friends, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. 13 For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live. 14 Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.*

If you are a Christian this morning, walking in the Spirit is not an optional extra to the Christian faith. We have an obligation not to live according to the flesh – our human nature because it brings death! We are called to put our sinful actions to death instead. The Spirit puts His spotlight on sin in our lives – we need to deal with it.

◆ Life in the Spirit frees us

*15 For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, "Father! my Father!" and*

◆ Life in the Spirit makes us the children of God

*16 God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children.*

*17 Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.*

The Spirit changes our status from being lost, not to found, but to being the children of God. God gives us status as His children. And He brings us into relationship with God – a familiarity. We are so formal with God but the Spirit causes us to call out that most intimate of family relationships – not Father but Dad!

How do I sum up this morning? If the Holy Spirit empowers us, indwells us, makes us alive, frees us, makes us God's children – then why is it that so often our lives reflect the flesh – human nature – than the Holy Spirit? So many of our actions are of the flesh, and our speech is of the flesh, and our thoughts are of the flesh. And Christians don't do anything about it. Why on earth not when the Spirit empowers us to change and be different?

★ Because some think God is mysterious so it can't be done.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.." (Cowper) Really? To many Christians God is mysterious. That's a shame because God is not mysterious. Look at the following Scripture where Paul describes the gospel in the following terms: *Col 1: 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-- 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

We have a God who is anxious to spill the beans. He has made known to us mysteries that were hidden from others for generations. . And the Spirit opens all this to our minds. Hold out your hand this morning and let the Holy Spirit lead you through life! Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

★ Because some prefer the flesh or want God to "rubber stamp" their will

Why live in the flesh? Because for whatever reason we prefer to do things our way. That's not God's way. Doing things God's way is walking in the Spirit; discerning His will and way and walking in it. This morning God wants us to stop and consider who's trying to lead who. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me, break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.

★ Because some can't be bothered

Let's get real and be honest towards the living God this morning. We know how we acquire the knowledge of God's will. We know what to do with it. We know how to find it – because God has found us and indwells us by His Spirit. He wants us to listen to His voice and take His lead.

**So how much time do we spend with God? How much time do we desire His presence?**

***Ephe 6:18 (TEV) Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God's people.***

**If you are not aware of where God is leading you in life or the issues in your life that God is dealing with then have you spent time with God about it? We have a Dad who is interested in every facet of our lives, but have we been bothered to share it with Him. Spend more time with God – make that difference.**

***Jude 20 But you, my friends, keep on building yourselves up on your most sacred faith. Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit.***

**How do we respond to what we have heard this morning?**

*Spirit of the Living God*

*Fall afresh on me;*

*Spirit of the living God,*

*Fall afresh on me.*

*Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.*

*Spirit of the living God,*

*Fall afresh on me.*

*Preached at MRBC Felixstowe*

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