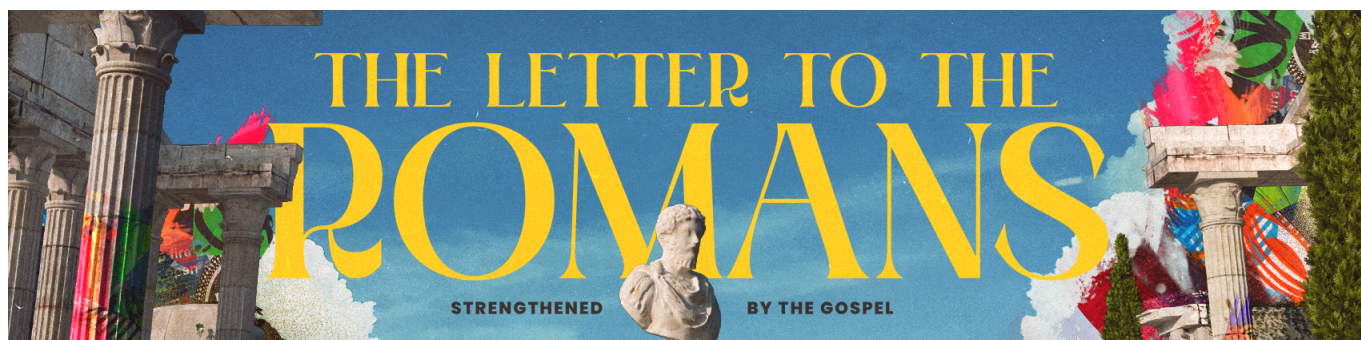




Romans (Strengthened by the Gospel) (Week 11/18) Life in the Spirit

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *Where in your relationship with God are you relying on rule-keeping rather than resting in the fact that you already belong to Christ? What would it look like this week to obey out of love rather than obligation?*

Warm-Up

1. What is a significant event in your life that changed how you see the world and yourself?

Read Romans 8:1-11

2. What does Paul begin with “therefore”? What is the reason there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?
3. How do you feel about the verdict “there is now no condemnation”?
4. What have we been set free from? Who sets us free?
5. In what way are the “life in the flesh” and “life in the Spirit” different? How is it freeing that “life according to the Spirit” is a position we live out of and not a standard to live up to?
6. Read Ezekiel 36:26-27. How does the Spirit enable us to please God?
7. How have you seen the Spirit shaping your desires over time?
8. If you have the Spirit of God, which realm are you part of? Who has the Spirit?
9. What reasons may cause someone to doubt if they have the Spirit or not? What assurance would you give to them? Why is the reception of the Spirit not based on how we feel?
10. How did the Spirit work in Jesus (at Easter)? If we also face death, why can we be confident the Spirit will work in us in the same way?
11. How does the indwelling of the Spirit change your day to day? When are you most aware of the Spirit’s presence, and when are you least aware?
12. What would help you more conscientiously walk in step with the Spirit?
13. How does the indwelling of God’s Spirit assure us we are no longer condemned?

Read Romans 8:12-17

14. Who does the Spirit define us as? What are the best aspects of being children?
15. How does being children of God, transform how we relate to God?
16. How does the Roman approach to adoption shape how we understand our own adoption by God?
17. How does your prayer life reflect your status as a child of God? How could you reflect this cherished position more?

Apply *Consider your frontlines. What freedom do you have in living out of the Spirit, rather than up to a standard of life in the Spirit?*

Pray *Gracious Father, thank you for the life we have in the Spirit. Help us to delight and marvel at being your children. Grow our confidence in following you, and walking in the way of the Spirit day by day. Amen.*

GOING DEEPER

Romans (Strengthened by the Gospel) (Week 11/18) Life in the Spirit

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Front Line this Week

Buy a ticket & invite a friend or colleague along to the Public Lecture on "The Bible in the Age of AI".

For Families

- *Download:* some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "If Christ is in you" by Simon Dickson:
allsouls.org/Groups/446577/More_Than_Conquerors.aspx?show_media=346412&show_file=391486
- *Listen (sermon):* "Adopted by the Father" by Hugh Palmer:
allsouls.org/Groups/314446/C228_A_BETTER_HOPE.aspx?show_media=213420&show_file=226680
- *Listen (sermon):* "No Condemnation" by Vaughan Roberts:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/no-condemnation/>
- *Listen (sermon):* "Life in the Spirit" by Andrew Turnbull:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/life-in-the-spirit/#sermons>
- *Listen (sermon):* "Children of God" by Vaughan Roberts:
<https://stebbes.org/sermons/children-of-god/>
- *Listen (sermon):* "Realm of the Flesh, Realm of the Spirit" by Andrew Judd:
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1v1sQO6APL0LiggjPVAX08?si=e30cf5f8932f4159>
- *Read (book):* "Into the Heart of Romans" by N.T. Wright. 

Series Resources

- *Read:* "'Strengthened by the Gospel'" by Brian Rosner. 
- *Read:* "The Story of God Bible Commentary: Romans" by Michael Bird.
- *Read:* "Epistle of Paul to the Romans" by F. F. Bruce. 
- *Read:* "The Message of Romans" by John Stott. 
- *Read:* "The Epistle to the Romans" by Leon Morris. 
- *Watch:* "Romans" by the Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-romans/>

 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

ROMANS (STRENGTHENED BY THE GOSPEL)

*Week 11/18 “Life in the Spirit”
by Amy Norman (26/07/2026, Toowoomba)*

성령안에서의 삶 | ஆவிக்குள்ளான வாழ்வு

Bible Passage: Romans 8:1-17

*Heavenly Father, as we come to your Word,
please may your Spirit give us understanding
of our identity, our present, and future in the Spirit.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*

Paul opens chapter 8 with the most incredible claim:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ... *Romans 8:1*

- Everything so far in Romans, all we have been exploring, leads to this point. That's why he says *therefore*. Paul's been making the case, and this is the verdict which he lands: there is now no condemnation.
- We are saved. We are free. We have been brought from death to life. Right now we have no judgement to fear, which should be, as Tom Wright puts it, "quite simply, the solid foundation for Christian joy."
- And the reason we can bask in this freedom, and be confident that we have now no condemnation is spelt out in verse 2:

... because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. *verse 2*

- We have been set free *from* the law of sin and death, through Christ Jesus in the Spirit.
- All the demands of the law, condemnation brought by sin,

the certain penalty of death,
have been satisfied by death of God's own son on the cross,
and the requirements of the law have not been abandoned,
but fulfilled through the Spirit.

- We could spend the whole time today unpacking just verses 1 to 4, as it is a dense conclusion of much of Paul's thought about the law, and a wonderful summary of the gospel.
- But with the foundational truth that there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, we can look ahead to what this new life in Christ is all about, this new life that is defined by being *in the Spirit*.
- Chapter 8 helps us to understand what life in the Spirit looks like. Life in the Spirit is characterised by:

**Minds Set on what the Spirit Desires,
Living in the Realm of the Spirit, and
Adopted as Children of God.**

3

MINDS SET ON WHAT THE SPIRIT DESIRES | VERSES 5-8

성령께서 원하시는 것에 마음을 두라 | ஆவியானவர் விரும்புவதைச் செய்யும் மனப்பக்குவம்

First, we have **minds set on what the Spirit desires**. Verse 5 ...

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. *verses 5-6*

- There are two contrasts set up here:
between those who live according to the flesh,
and those who live according to the Spirit.
- Importantly, the contrast between “flesh” and “Spirit” is not comparing physical and spiritual things, like the body is somehow bad but everything we don't see is better, but this comparison is essentially between life *before* being in Christ, described as in the “flesh”
and life after being in Christ, life which is defined by the “Spirit”.
- Paul contrasts these two different ways of life in what they desire, what their minds are set on, and what this way of life leads to:
 - Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on what the flesh desires,

4

are governed by the flesh, and result in death.

- And those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on what the Spirit desires, are governed by the Spirit, and result in life and peace.
- Obviously, we can all struggle to choose to live by the Spirit over what we might otherwise desire.
But Paul isn't here setting up what we should aim for, but he is contrasting our former selves, and our current selves.
- This is a statement for *how in Christ* we have changed positions from living according to the flesh (with all our desires, minds shaped by the world) and *now* living according to the Spirit (with our desires and minds shaped by the Spirit).
- We have gone from living a way that only leads to death (no matter how much good we do), to living a way that results in life and peace (all because of what Jesus has done).
- Without Christ and without the Spirit it is impossible to please God. From verse 7:

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. *verse 7-8*

- No matter how hard we try, before being in Christ, all our actions are hostile to God.
- It is only the Spirit who makes it possible for us to obey God's law and please him.>

5

God knew we were unable to completely keep his law, and he promised to do something about it. To the prophet Ezekiel the Lord foretold that:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. *Ezekiel 36:26-27*

- God's Spirit who was promised, has now been given to everyone in Christ.
- Because of God's Spirit in us, we are now no longer hostile to God but can please him.
The Spirit gives us new minds and desires to live out of, rather than a new standard to live up to.
- This is so freeing! We are no longer condemned, tied to a standard we can't possibly meet, but we are empowered by God himself to follow his ways.
- If you've followed Jesus for any length of time, hopefully you can look back and see how the Spirit has been shaping your desires, how he has been shaping what you love and who you love.
- As Christians, sometimes we can be more used to seeing ourselves as "sinners", rather than those who have hearts and wills changed by the Spirit.
- Of course we still sin and struggle,

6

but in Christ, in the Spirit and because of the Spirit,
we *are* given new desires and a new way of thinking.

- Sometimes that might be hard to detect or to feel, but it is true,
for life in the Spirit it is not a way of life we strive to attain,
but a new identity and status we live out of. > [2]

7

LIVING IN THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT | VERSES 9-11

성령의 다스림 안에서 살기 | ஆவியானவரின் ஆளுகைக்குள்ளான வாழ்வு

Second we see life in the Spirit means **living in the realm of the Spirit**. Verse 9 ...

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. *Verses 9-11*

- Paul is clear: you are in the realm of the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you.
- “Realm” simply means a kingdom, a distinct region of rule and dominion.
Many translations don’t include “realm” but it helps us to see that being in the Spirit is a matter of *who* we are governed by,
and that there are certain *benefits* of being in this kingdom that are given to all its citizens.
- The benefit in focus here is that being in the realm of the Spirit, means we are given life, for the *Spirit gives life*.
- We see in verse 11, *the Spirit* raised Christ from the dead,
and the Spirit will give us life.
- The gospel, the good news of Jesus, is always about *both* his death and resurrection.

8

As we saw last week, Christ's death broke how we are bound to the law.
And now, we see how the Spirit raised Christ from the dead,
and is promised to raise us too.

- Giving life is one of the central works of the Spirit.
The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead.
This Spirit lives in all who belong to Jesus.
And so we can expect the Spirit to work in the same way for us, raising us from the dead.
- Today if we want to be sure if something does what it claims to do,
then we can rely on reviews and other people's experience.
And in an even greater way, Jesus' resurrection in history is the evidence the Spirit can
raise people from the dead (for he did it with Jesus)./
- This does not mean that *right now* when we trust in Jesus we skip death
(unless of course Jesus returns in our lifetime.)
We know all too well that Christians, with the Spirit in them, still die.
The effect of sin still lingers.
But we are assured that Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies,
that is we will be given life *after* death - an incorruptible life,
following the pattern of Jesus' resurrected life.
- Being in the realm of the Spirit means assurance of our future resurrection.

9

- Crucially, this is not a benefit just for some,
but the Spirit lives *in all who trust in Jesus*.
- In verse 9 Paul outlines the boundaries of who has the Spirit.
Positive: You are in the realm of the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you,
Negative: If you do not have the Spirit of Christ, you do not belong to Christ.
- There is no middle option. You can't belong to Christ and not have the Spirit.
- And yet many Christians still wonder and are worried about *if* they have the Spirit,
or even *if* they are really saved.
- Paul has a simple test to know if you belong to Christ, as he says later in Romans 10:

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,
you will be saved. *Romans 10:9*

- If you believe that Jesus is your Lord,
then the Spirit is within you.
- The Holy Spirit residing in us and being present with us is not dependent on how you feel,
or what you can or can't do.
We are only saved by what Jesus has done. So if you trust in him, you are saved,
you have the Spirit.

10

- The Spirit *is a clear sign* that we are not under the law of sin and death, that we are not under condemnation, for in Christ, God comes to dwell *in us* by his Spirit.
- The whole story of salvation is one of God coming to dwell with his people. First in the garden, then in the Tabernacle, in the Temple, and through Christ's atoning death, now by his own Spirit.
- The Spirit doesn't just dwell with us now, but he is the assurance that we will be resurrected, and given life to ultimately dwell with God forever.

11

ADOPTED AS CHILDREN OF GOD | VERSES 12-17

하나님의 자녀로 입양됨 | தேவனுடைய பிள்ளைகளாகப் புத்திர சுவிகாரம்

Finally, life in the Spirit means we are **adopted as children of God**. Verse 14 ...

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Verses 14-16.

- The Spirit not only gives life, but we are bestowed a new privileged position as *children of God*.
- You've probably heard about people who *finally* getting to work for their dream company, only to discover they are treated terribly, constantly under the threat of being fired if they don't work harder for less, because many others want to have their role.
- Well it is not like that with God! In the Spirit we are made children, not slaves or temporary employees. The Spirit is different to the power of sin and death. In Christ we are not enslaved, but we are free. In the Spirit, we don't need to live in fear again.

12

- And in a healthy family, being a child comes with incredible security and assurance.
Being a child means you belong, it is not a right that can just be taken away.
Even more than rights, being a child means you are loved and cherished.
- As a child of God, you are loved and cherished by God.

My Grandad loved golf. One Christmas with all my cousins, we decided that Grandad's golf buggy would be the *perfect* vehicle for all our shenanigans. We used it to jump piles of dirt, hoon through the bush, and even tow each other on boogie boards behind it. It turns out the golf buggy was not built for those kinds of adventures. It's probably not the best example of consequences, for even though my Grandad loved his golf buggy (and our adventures destroyed it), he clearly loved us even more. Even today, the biggest and most prominent photo on my Grandad & Granma's fridge, is all my cousins and siblings packed into the golf buggy.

- Because there is no condemnation,
we never need to doubt how much we are loved as children of God.
- Being led by the Spirit is not conditional - it's not up to us to earn the status of children,
but links back to being in the realm of the Spirit,
that those who are governed by the Spirit, all who trust in Christ, are children of God.
- How we become children of God is clear, for *verse 15*:

13

... the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. *verse 15b*

- We are adopted as full children of God.
The reference to sonship does not exclude women,
but points to the Roman practice of adoption.
- In Rome, it was a common practice for children or even adult men to be adopted.
When you were adopted, all your past debts were cleared,
and you were bestowed the class privileges of that family, you could inherit property,
and were considered a full member of the family, with no distinction.
- And this is what the Spirit does for us.
We are completely children of God, with all our debts cleared.
- And we know that we are adopted as children of God,
for it is by the Spirit that we can address God, the Creator of the Universe, as our Father.
- "Abba" is an intimate term used for your own beloved Father.
And this is how we are invited to relate to God, as our beloved Father.
- So of course we can now bring delight to God our Father,
for in the Spirit we are his children.

14

- And as his children, we are also heirs, “heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ”.
- Part of being God’s children is that we are co-heirs with Christ.
Normally, in any type of kingdom,
there is *one heir*, and even if you are a child of the king,
you might be far down the line or skipped all together.
- And yet, we are not only belong in the *realm* of the Spirit,
made *children*, but we also share in *Christ’s inheritance*.
- This is a remarkable position,
that of course we don’t deserve,
but are generously given by our Father in Heaven.
- And as we await resurrection and new Creation,
this status as Christ’s co-heirs leaves no room for self-righteousness,
but we are to live in the pattern of Jesus:
sharing in his suffering in order to share in his glory.

15

CONCLUSION

- One of the most remarkable truths of the gospel is that in Christ *we have life in the Spirit*.
- We have life now, and not condemnation.
We have no reason to fear judgement,
or worry if Christ’s death was enough.
Sin and death is defeated.
- We don’t have the pressure to live up to a standard,
but we are given the mindset and desires of the Spirit.
Even if we don’t feel particularly spiritual, in Christ, the Spirit is directing us.
- We are given life, freedom of life now,
and assurance of resurrection to come.
And that assurance of life is for all who trust in Jesus.
- We are adopted children of God.
No matter what our relationships are like right now,
we can experience God’s love and delight in us, by his very Spirit.
- We are not condemned, but we have life and peace with God.

16