



Sermon, Sunday March 10, 2024 “Life through the Spirit of God”

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:6-11 ⁶To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot, ⁸and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁹But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Introduction: The Essentials of the Gospel

Today is the fourth Sunday in Lent. I hope that we all spend the season of Lent reading the Bible, praying, and meditating to build a closer relationship with the Lord. The more we repeatedly read and meditate on the Bible, the more we will experience the joy and fulfillment it brings.

Today’s text is Romans chapter 8. Romans 8:1 says there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And in verse 39, the last verse of chapter 8, Paul says, “**nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” In Romans 8:1, there is no condemnation, meaning that those who are in Christ Jesus have life. And Romans 8:39 says that no other creature can separate us from God's love, meaning that no force in this world can interfere with the life given to us through Jesus Christ. The above two verses mentioned by Paul are important points of the gospel.

Today’s text explains to us in more detail what the essence of the gospel is. I hope that through today’s message, we will gain deep insight into the gospel we possess through Jesus.

Body: The mind on the flesh and the mind on the Spirit

To explain the gospel, Apostle Paul divides it into ‘**the mind on the flesh**’ and ‘**the mind on the Spirit**’. In verse 6 of today’s text, Paul says, “**To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**” We may think of the mind on the flesh in this passage as physical instincts such as sexual desire, appetite, desire for social achievement, or immoral human actions and thoughts. However, the mind on the flesh that Paul refers to in this verse refers to the attitude of making oneself the center of one's life.

For the Jews at the time of Paul, this kind of life meant that they were recognized by God for keeping the law. Laws are norms and enforcement rules established by God's people to live according to God's will. In fact, we cannot criticize people for keeping the law because it is an effort to live an upright and good life. Rather, those who keep the law well should be praised.

However, contrary to our expectations, Paul criticized the Jews' way of life as the mind on the flesh. Do you think this thought of Paul is correct? Or do you think not?



However, the reason why Paul said that a life centered on the law is death is found in Romans 8:7 as follows: **“For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot”**.

I hope you will not misunderstand that through this passage, Paul is denying the tradition of the law itself. Through this verse, Paul pointed out that human life cannot be completed through the law. In other words, Paul thought that even if the law was made perfect and people tried to keep the law, justice and peace would not be completely achieved in this world.

But why can't a life of diligently following the law bring us justice, peace, and true happiness and rest? If we were to explain this kind of life in terms of how we live our lives, it would be as follows. There are probably people around us who have overcome poverty and become successful businessmen. Or there may be people who are politically successful or academically successful. Probably all these people had hopes and made efforts to achieve their dreams before becoming successful.

However, once they achieve something, they want to achieve something greater than what they dreamed of before. This is because the joy and happiness gained through current accomplishments no longer appeal to them. People live their lives in this way and at some point, they must come down from the peak. In fact, people who continue to dream of achievement become frustrated because they cannot accept their reality.

So Paul says that the mind on the flesh is death. Additionally, Paul knew that humans were created in the image of God, and that therefore humans cannot be happy unless their souls are satisfied. Paul talks about this human existence in Romans 8:22, **“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now.”**

As Paul sees it, the creatures of this world have no possibility of salvation through their own efforts. A life lived with the mind on the flesh may feel good for a moment and receive people's attention and praise, but it is only relatively valuable, and in the end, it is bound to lead to death.

So Paul calls out to change our mind on the flesh to mind on the Spirit. The spirit that Paul spoke of is the **‘Spirit of God’** and the **‘Spirit of Christ’** mentioned in verse 9 of today's text. Those who have difficulty understanding the expression ‘spirit’ in this verse can understand **‘spirit’ as ‘mind’**.

Paul argues that when the Spirit of God dwells in us, we no longer live with ‘the mind on the flesh.’ This is because our mind is not on ourselves but on God. So what does it mean that our mind belongs to God? It means that we focus on God's creation, salvation, life, love and promises.

In other words, saying that we have the **‘Spirit of Christ’** means that we make the kingdom of God and its promises proclaimed by Jesus Christ the center of our lives. This means seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness instead of worrying about what we will eat, drink, and wear. And we must believe and focus on God's words and promises without doubting them.

However, Paul's call may sound empty to many people who live in fear of being left behind in a society of infinite competition. However, we must be able to remove the darkness from our lives and find light in the word of God's promise.

I think the content of verse 11 of today's text is the light given to us. Romans 8:11 says: **“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”**

There is a sentence that is repeated in this passage. It is the sentence **“He who raised Jesus from the dead.”** Romans 8:11 does not simply say that God the Creator saves, but that the One who raised Jesus saves. This means that if we do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is no life in our mortal bodies.



Can you Amen and agree with Paul's claim? Are you sure that if we believe in Jesus Christ, that we become one with Him, that His Spirit is in us, and that we will be resurrected from the dead on the last day?

Regarding this question, Paul says the following in verse 10 of today's text: **“But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”**

What does the expression **“the Spirit is life because of righteousness”** mean in this verse? It means that we, who are mortal, gain life because God, who will complete life, has entered us as the Spirit. People who know this are no longer confined by the law of the flesh, that is, by the idea of becoming a dignified and noble person and making a name for themselves. This is because these people know and are convinced that the life and peace that Paul mentioned in verse 6 of today's text are absolute in our lives.

Conclusion: The Spirit of God

Now let's summarize today's message. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! There is a clear difference between those who follow the flesh and those who follow the spirit. Those who follow the flesh deny the existence and power of God. Also, they cannot please God because we follow the laws of the world rather than the laws of God. Ultimately, they live a life without God.

However, those who are guided by the Spirit of God and follow the Spirit think of life and peace. The moment we believe in Jesus, we participate in eternal life. The peace we enjoy is not given by the world but comes from heaven. Therefore, everyone who think according to the Spirit of God eventually regains peace no matter what the situation.

Above all, the Spirit of God guides us if we do what pleases God. In addition, we live a life that is not just for ourselves but pleases God and shares the grace and love we have received from our neighbors. I hope everyone enjoys this blessing.

