

# Resurrection Life Now

📖 Romans 8:10-13

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**Q:** How do we keep the Trinity from becoming “both/and” of eastern mysticism?

**A:** Some branches of eastern mysticism reject either/or thinking and embrace both/and. This questioner is asking how we avoid the both/and thinking of eastern mysticism with the Trinity, by saying that God is both one and three. I'll answer much like Ravi Zacharias would. Ravi was from India and knows all too well eastern mysticism. First, we're not saying God is both one and three in the same sense and at the same time; we are saying that God is one in essence or character and three in person; that there is a unity in one sense and a diversity in another sense. If we were saying that God is one and three in the same sense then there would be a contradiction; but because we are saying they are one and three in a difference sense there is no contradiction, this is either/or thinking, not both/and. Second, what Ravi argues is that within creation there is unity and diversity and so there must on an ultimate level be unity and diversity. His answer is that the unity and diversity on the ultimate level is the unity and diversity in the Creator; such that the unity and diversity we find in creation is derivative of the unity and diversity in the Creator. And the unity and diversity in the Creator is prior to and the archetype for the unity and diversity in the creation. Third, we're also saying that the unity and diversity is necessary for God to be self-contained. In other words, you have an even greater problem if you deny the unity and diversity within God. Take Allah - Allah we are told is a solitary monotheism, unity with no diversity. In that situation for Allah to love Allah has to create an object to love. In other words, Allah is not self-contained, he is not independent, he is dependent upon a created object in order to love. The God of the Bible is not like that. The God of the Bible is Father, Son and Spirit so that the Father could eternally love the Son and the Son could eternally love the Spirit and so forth. God needed nothing outside of Himself. He didn't need to create anything. He is self-contained and independent. So the concept of God within Christianity is so much richer than anything Islam has to offer and gives an explanation of the unity and diversity within creation. Islam is stuck with a God who needs to create in order to express himself; the God of Christianity is complete in and of Himself and creates only because He wants to; but the creation is not needed by Him, it adds nothing to Him. He is self-contained and independent of all creation.

For those of you who have not been with us, we are studying the Epistle to the Romans. The section we are studying is Romans 6-8 which is the doctrine of sanctification or how to live the Christian life. Obviously not all those who claim to be Christians live the Christian life. This may be due to the fact that they aren't Christians to begin with or they are living in rebellion or they haven't yet learned how to live the Christian life. To become a Christian one needs to simply put his or her faith in Jesus Christ who died for their sin and rose again on the third day. To stop living in rebellion a Christian needs to realize that they will be living out of fellowship with God and will be disciplined accordingly by God for rebellion and will not be earning rewards to be enjoyed in heaven. To learn how to live the Christian life a Christian needs to study Romans 6-8 and other related passages which give the principles. Obviously since Paul had to instruct Christians on how to live the Christian life it's not automatic. It is something that must be learned. By way of overview we have learned that prior to faith in Christ each of us was classified by God as an old man or unregenerate and we were slaves to the sin nature inherited from Adam, predisposed toward evil. As slaves to the sin nature we were legally obligated to obey its authority. But at the moment of gospel hearing coupled with faith in Christ we were justified and simultaneously our old man was crucified with Christ, buried with Christ and raised with Christ so that we are now classified as a new man or regenerate and the Spirit comes to indwell us. We still possess the sin nature but we also have a new nature. The new nature is a disposition toward good. The new nature agrees with the Law of God; but when we try to fulfill the Law it arouses the old sin nature to rebel against the authority of the Law with the result that we sin and experience death or temporal separation from God. It is this experience of constant defeat as we try to please God that eventually led Paul to ask, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The answer was the Holy Spirit. Only when we depend upon Him and allow Him to have the controlling influence in our life do we have victory over the sin nature. The result is an experience of life as He reproduces His life in ours, what is known as the fruit of the Spirit. So the way to live the Christian life is to learn to depend upon the Holy Spirit but as Christians we may still live according to the flesh. That gets us up to speed on Romans 6:1-8:4.

Last week we studied Rom 8:5-9. By way of review of this immediate context before we push on to 8:1, in 8:5 Paul teaches us why Christians live by the flesh. The reason is because we set our minds on the things of the flesh and that influences us to live according to the flesh. The things of the flesh are worldly things, earthly things and earthly priorities. The more we dwell on these things the more we will walk according to these things. But if we set our minds on the things of the Spirit, spiritual things, heavenly things and heavenly priorities, then we will walk according to the Spirit. In order to increasingly set our minds on the things of the Spirit we must orient ourselves by daily study of the word, prayer and attending a strong Bible teaching Church that applies the word. Doing these things in themselves will not sanctify you but they will put you in a position to be sanctified by the Spirit. In 8:6 Paul reminded us that when we set our mind on the things of the flesh then the result is an experience of death, that is, a temporal separation from God because of sin which keeps us out of fellowship with God. But when we set our mind on the things of the Spirit then the result is an experience of life which is a temporal connection to God which results in the fruit of the Spirit. In 8:7 Paul explains why the mind set on the

flesh results in death, it is because it is hostile toward God who is life. He then states that the mind set on the flesh does not and cannot submit to the law of God. It is in a continual state of insubordination to God. This is why, in 8:8 no one who is "in the flesh can please God." To be "in the flesh" is to be unregenerate. It's the same expression Paul used in 7:5 of himself when he was unregenerate. So the expression "in the flesh" is Paul's expression for someone who is "unregenerate," whereas the expression "according to the flesh" in 8:4 and 5 refers to someone who is "regenerate" but walking according to the flesh, another indication that a Christian's life can look just like a non-Christian's life, even though it shouldn't, it is not only a possibility but a reality. In any case, in 8:8, those who are "in the flesh" are unregenerate" and therefore cannot please God because as unbelievers they always set their mind on the things of the flesh and the flesh is hostile toward God, and cannot submit to God. The Spirit has to convict a person of the truth value of the gospel for them to come to God by faith. In 8:9 Paul says, however, we are not "in the flesh" but "in the Spirit." To be "in the Spirit" is the opposite of to be "in the flesh." Therefore to be "in the Spirit" is to be regenerate. He then states by way of a 1<sup>st</sup> class condition, "if as is the fact," the Spirit of God dwells in you. In other words, if, and He does. The Spirit of God dwells in all regenerate people during the dispensation of grace. In contrast, at the end of verse 9 Paul states that if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. So then if a person does not have the Spirit of God indwelling then that person is not regenerate. All people who are regenerate have the Spirit of God indwelling them. The indwelling is permanent during the dispensation of grace whereas during the dispensation of the law only certain individuals like prophets, priests and kings had the Spirit indwelling them and His indwelling of them was temporary, in order to enable them to fulfill their particular mission. Once their mission was fulfilled the Spirit of God was taken from them. So we have a unique doctrine in the dispensation of grace and that is that the Spirit permanently indwells all believers.

Today we come to 8:10 and this is not an easy section. We have the question in 8:10 of what it means that "the body is dead." We have the question in 8:10 of whether Paul is talking about the human spirit or the Holy Spirit. We have the question in 8:11 of whether the giving of life to our mortal bodies is physical life or a kind of spiritual life. But by and large I think these questions are answered by 8:12-13 which indicate that he is speaking of spiritual realities and not physical realities. The resurrection text is 8:11 which essentially teaches that believers can live the resurrection life now as they live by the Spirit who dwells in them. In other words, the quality of life that we can live now, even while in mortal bodies, is a resurrection quality of life because the Spirit produces that life in us as we depend upon Him. In 8:10 we have another 1<sup>st</sup> class condition; "if as is the fact." The first class is the condition of assumed reality for the sake of argument. It is often translated "since" instead of "if" in order to clarify the author's original intent. **If Christ is in you** should therefore be translated **Since Christ is in you. Since Christ is in you** is the statement of fact. The statement "Christ in you" is mentioned four times in the NT. The phrase is used in two connections. The first usage is in Gal 4:19. Here Paul says "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you." Here Paul was laboring with the Galatians in order to get them to live by the Spirit for sanctification with the result that Christ's life was reproduced in them. The expression "Christ

in you” referred to a transformed life. The second usage is in 2 Cor 13:5. Here Paul says, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” Paul’s point with the Corinthians is the same as that with the Galatians. They needed to make sure they were walking in the faith. If they were Jesus Christ was “in them” in an empowering sense, reproducing His life in theirs. The third usage is in Col 1:27. Here Paul says he is a minister of the “...mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” The mystery is that Christ would dwell in Gentile believers. This was not known in prior ages. The fourth usage is our passage, Rom 8:10. Here Paul says, “Since Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” Thus, the expression “Christ in you” is used in two connections; one positional and the other experiential. The first connection is the positional truth that Christ indwells all believers during the present age. Both Col 1:27 and Rom 8:10 teach this important positional truth that not only does the Spirit indwell but Christ also indwells the believer. The second connection is the experiential truth that Christ’s life is reproduced in believers who are living by faith. Both Gal 4:19 and 2 Cor 13:5 teach that Christ’s life is reproduced in believers who are living by faith. It’s the first connection that Paul is teaching here in 8:10, the positional truth that Christ indwells all believers. That is a statement of fact.

Now because Christ indwells the regenerate person as a statement of fact, two things are true in 8:10. On the one hand, the body is dead because of sin but on the other hand the Spirit is life because of righteousness. “spirit” could be translated as a lower case with reference to the human spirit or as upper case with reference to the Holy Spirit. The contextual evidence favors the Holy Spirit. Paul’s point seems to be that since Christ dwells in you then even though the physical body is dead due to it being the vehicle through which the flesh commits its deeds, yet nevertheless, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. It should not be translated Spirit is alive. The Greek word is not “alive” but “life.” Paul is contrasting what the body is due to the flesh’s work through the body with what the Spirit is due to the righteousness provided by Christ. The Spirit is life because righteousness has been provided by the indwelling Christ.

In verse 11 we have an explanation for how that righteous life is brought into existence through us. **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** There is a flow of power or an order of power that was involved in the physical resurrection of Christ Jesus and that same flow of power is involved in bringing spiritual resurrection life to the mortal body of the Christian (as we depend upon the Spirit). Note first that Paul moves from the truth of how Christ was physically raised from the dead to the truth that we will be given spiritual life in our mortal bodies in the same way. The first expression shows how Jesus was raised. It says **the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.** Obviously it’s the **Spirit** who **dwells in you.** But the Spirit of who? Who is it who **raised Jesus from the dead?** It’s simply stated to be **Him**; the personal pronoun **Him**. So who is **Him?** **Him** is the Father. So the Father **raised Jesus from the dead.** And it’s the Spirit of the Father who **dwells in you.** The second expression is that **He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will**

**also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** So again, who is it **who raised Christ Jesus from the dead?** The Father. So who is it who **will also give life to your mortal bodies?** It's the Father. But the way the Father does this is stated to be **through His Spirit who dwells in you.** So you see that there is an order and the order is Father through Spirit to our mortal bodies. You see, apart from this impartation of life from the Father through the Spirit to our mortal bodies we would continually experience death, constantly being out of fellowship with God by committing the deeds of the flesh. But because the Father gives life through the Spirit to our mortal bodies then our mortal bodies can experience life; the fruit of the Spirit by being in fellowship with God. So verse 11 is teaching that we can enjoy resurrection life now because God gives us this resurrection life through His Spirit who indwells us. Now it's not automatic, we don't automatically enjoy this type of life, this is life that is enjoyed only as we walk according to the Spirit. But Paul's point here is simply to say that it is available to us from the Father through the Spirit.

Now I hope you noticed in verse 11 the Father, the Son and the Spirit; three distinct persons and yet one essence. So again we see the Trinity and yet some groups say there is no Trinity; some groups say God is pure unity with no diversity; yet Scripture says God is unity with diversity; one with three; three within the one; one and three not in the same way but one in essence and three in person. Essence or being is not exhausted by the concept of person. Essence is the substance or nature of a thing. Person is a capacity and is distinguishable from the essence. There can be an essence or being with multiple persons or capacities. What we are maintaining is that God is a unity as far as His essence is concerned; there is but one God, not three gods, and yet within this God there are three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with distinct but related roles. Some of those roles are seen here in that it is the Father who gives life to our mortal bodies but He does it through His Spirit. We can conclude then that the life we have available to us is powerful since it is the same power that raised Christ from among the dead ones.

In 8:12 Paul signals a conclusion with the words **So then** or "Consequently therefore," **brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh**—you see that we are under obligation but he states what we are not obligated to first, we are not obligated **to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.** We were obligated to live according to the flesh as unregenerate people because the flesh was master and we were its slaves, legally obligated to obey it. But now we are **brethren**, regenerate people and the flesh is no longer our master and we are no longer its slaves. So we are under no obligation to live according to the flesh any longer. Obviously, Paul does not state who we are under obligation to yet, but it is to the Spirit. We are legally obligated to live according to the Spirit but before he gets to the Spirit he continues in verse 13 with our not being obligated to the flesh. He says, **for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die!** You see, it's the principle of Rom 6:23, the wages of sin is death, this is the wage for all sin, even the personal sin of a Christian. When we sin we are automatically separated from fellowship with God. Death is always a separation. Obviously we aren't separated from God in hell, we have the Spirit of God indwelling us, we have Christ indwelling us, but we are separated from fellowship with God. Every time a believer sins he is separated from fellowship with God,

he is not enjoy the resurrection life, he is experiencing death. But, by contrast, verse 13 says **if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** This living is an experience of life, not heaven. And if death is temporal separation from God in context then life is connection with God. And when we are in connection with God then we are living **by the Spirit** who Himself is **putting to death the deeds of the body.** He uses us to produce His fruit, His righteousness; His life gets reproduced in ours, which is why it is called elsewhere the fruit of the Spirit. It is the resurrection life experienced now, this side of the physical resurrection through our mortal bodies. That's why this is such a powerful resurrection passage. The passage says that a believer, as he lives according to the Spirit enjoys resurrection life now, not the transformation of his body into a resurrection body, but the fruit of the Spirit through the mortal body. This is a critical spiritual truth for this present age. On the basis of the resurrection of Christ there is a new spiritual life available to believers, a life by the Spirit where His life is reproduced through us. That's what Paul meant in Gal 2:20 and here he said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in Me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God..." The Christian life is a life of faith, not a life of works, a life of grace through faith. The same way you are justified is the same way you are sanctified, by grace through faith, never on the basis of works! And as we live by faith the life of Christ is produced through us by the Father through the Spirit who indwells. These are great and tangible spiritual truths.

In conclusion, today we learn that resurrection life is available now for the believer as we live according to the Spirit. In Rom 8:10 he says, "Since Christ is in you" two truths are also true, on the one hand, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Holy Spirit is life because of the righteous foundation laid by Christ. In 8:11 he says, "But if the Spirit of the Father who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the Father who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. He's saying that resurrection life is available now from God through the indwelling Spirit. In 8:12 he gives a conclusion, "So then, brethren, we are under obligation" but we are not obligated "to the flesh, to live according to the flesh," for that obligation has been broken, and in 8:13, "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die," that is, the wages of sin is death and so if you live according to the flesh then you lose temporal fellowship with God and live in the muck and mire of sin. "But," Paul says, "if you live by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body and you will live, that is, you will have an experience of resurrection life now, a life that is transmitted to us by God the Father through God the Spirit. This is a life that we can enjoy now.

By application we can learn several things. First, both Christ and the Spirit indwell the believer. In verse 10 Christ is stated to indwell the believer. In verse 11 the Spirit is said to indwell the believer. This is a positional truth. Second, believers are obligated to live by the Spirit. This is a legal obligation. It does not mean that we always do live by the Spirit but we are obligated to. Third, if we live by the flesh then we experience death, a temporal separation of fellowship from God. It is not enjoyable for a Christian to live out of fellowship with God. Fourth, if we live by the Spirit then we experience life, a close connection with God which is the resurrection life now. This does not mean there is not a future physical resurrection, there is, but there is a kind of spiritual resurrection life

that we can enjoy now as we walk in close connection with God. This is the newness of life that Paul mentioned in Rom 6:4.