

Romans 8:10,11

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.

Remember that these verses are extending the description of what a Christian is. We have seen the believer contrasted with a non believer in the earlier verses. Then Paul tells us that a believer is someone who is in Christ and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, someone owned by Christ. This is true of every believer.

Now just to avoid any misunderstanding, there are a lot of variations in Christians. A believer can be a new believer or a mature believer. A believer can be walking obediently and faithfully or be temporarily choosing a sinful lifestyle. A believer can have varying degrees of fellowship with God. Scripture continually emphasizes a believer's need to willfully go forward in sanctification. All these things are part of the operational part of the theology that Paul lays out. But positionally, all believers, everywhere, in every period of history are in Christ, have Christ dwelling in them, and are bought by Christ.

Now on to verse 10 and 11.

I am going to use a lot of what I learned from Martin Lloyd Jones's commentary on Romans.

Keep in mind here that the goal of this chapter is to affirm the assurance of the believer. Because we aren't under the reign of sin but under the reign of grace, our final salvation is assured. Nothing can happen to it. In verses 10 and 11 Paul reveals our present situation and our future situation.

First Paul tells us that our bodies are dead because of sin. Then he tells us that our bodies will be resurrected in the future. This is the grand finale'. This is what all believers will experience after the death of this body.

Now, let's take a closer look at the verses.

I read that the Greek includes some interesting features here. The text is better translated "If Christ be in you, on the one hand." This better conveys that Paul was laying out a contrast. On the one hand you have something. On the other hand you have its opposite. This is important in understanding this passage. Why? Because we must determine whether

the S in Spirit should be capital or small. Is the Spirit in verse 10, where it says the Spirit is life, is it talking about the Holy Spirit or is it talking about our spirits? And if this is intended to be a direct contrast, what is being contrasted and how is that contrast most true? The contrast is a huge aid in the determination of whether this is the Holy Spirit or the believer's spirit.

Let's look at the concept of the "body being dead" first and I think the contrast will become obvious to us.

What does the body mean? The word used in the Greek means our physical body. It is not the word used for flesh. It is not Sarx. It is a different word and it is used for a different thing. Some of the concepts of body and flesh overlap, but it is important to understand the difference. I think I missed that in my overview of Romans 8:5-14. Mike and I talked about it and I knew he had a better understanding of it than I did. Mr. Jones also has a clear understanding of it so I am needing to borrow from him for this.

The flesh is a human nature in a fallen state apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The body is just that- the human flesh and bones that we reside in and that in some senses are us. It includes our capacity to reason- which is a capacity of the human brain.

Now what would be the opposite of our bodies? How would you fill in the blank in this statement, "on one hand we have the physical body, but on the other hand we have BLANK." Well in this case Paul appears to use the word "spirit". I don't believe he means the Holy Spirit. That would be a very awkward contrast. On one hand you have the human body but on the other hand you have the Holy Spirit. It would make more sense to say on the one hand you have the human body but on the other hand you have the human spirit. The flow of thought in the text makes much more sense if the contrast is one of the human body and the human spirit.

This week I encourage you to read Romans 8 making a distinct effort not to regard body and flesh as synonyms. Think about the difference between the two.

This begins to be clear in verse 8. It says those in the flesh cannot please God. This cannot possibly mean that those in a physical body cannot please God. So we see right off the bat that flesh and body are not used the same.

Let's read these verse substituting the word "flesh" with the definition of flesh- the human nature in a fallen state. Then we will substitute the

word body with the words “our human physical body”. For Spirit in verse 10 we will substitute our human regenerated spirit. I will read the interpretation we get by doing this. I don’t know about you but it helps me a lot in getting the thrust of this passage.

Romans 8:8-11

So then, those who are in the (human nature in a fallen state) cannot please God.

But you are not in the (human nature in a fallen state) but in the Holy Spirit of God, if indeed the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Holy Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

And if Christ [is] in you, On the one hand the human physical body [is] dead because of sin, but on the other hand the human regenerated spirit [is] life because of righteousness.

But if the Holy Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead (by resurrecting his dead physical human body) dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead (by resurrecting his dead human physical body) will also give life to your mortal human physical bodies through His Holy Spirit who dwells in you.

For if you live according to the (human nature in a fallen state) you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the human physical body, you will live.

When we are careful with the meaning of the words we get a lot more out of this text. It is always interesting to me how carefully the words are chosen when scripture talks about true spirituality.

Matter is never described in such a way as to make matter evil. That is Gnostic error that leads to thinking that it doesn’t matter what I do with my body because my body is evil.

It also doesn’t describe life in such a way that matter is all there is.

There is a true spirituality that is housed in matter, but matter doesn’t wholly explain it. Scripture is very precise regarding this topic so we don’t fall off either side of this tight rope that we walk on. And the help we are given is REAL help in the REAL lives we all live.

Believers are not in flesh, we are not in a fallen state. But we are in bodies. And those bodies carry a lot of baggage from our fallen-ness that we must deal with. Paul describes it with perfect accuracy.

Now back to the discussion of the body/spirit contrast in verses 10 and 11.

The whole argument we are hearing from Paul is about the believer in the human body and what will happen with that human body and why it matters.

Paul says that **the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.**

Note first note that Paul isn't saying that the body WILL die. He is saying that currently it is dead. In some way the body was alive in the past but it is no longer alive. It is now dead- right now. No matter how things appear, our bodies are in some sense dead.

Scripture tells us that God told Adam that **of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."**

When Adam was created he was alive spiritually and physically and would have remained that way forever if he had not sinned. When Adam sinned he was spiritually dead immediately and his body was as good as dead at that point. It contained a death penalty that was now part of his DNA. There was no cure for it. He had the seeds of death.

Well- how is the body dead? It sure looks alive.

Well first- it is **physically condemned**. Our bodies are as good as dead. They carry a death sentence that will not be avoided unless Christ returns while we live. We all have a limited amount of breaths that we will breathe. Our hearts will only tick for so long. Our days are all numbered. Scientifically our bodies reach their peak at about age 25 and from then on deteriorate. They can see it scientifically but can't understand it or why it can't be stopped. From the day you are born, you are as good as dead.

My brother and I were speaking this week and he said something that I think is fitting. We were talking about the fact that this planet is a dangerous place to live. He said in essence that this is true. And the ironic thing is the only way you can assure safety is to die. And it is the threat of death that makes us feel so unsafe.

As I thought about that I thought, praise God we have Romans. Praise God that God has revealed to us that while the body is dead, that death is not the end. And we, as believers can rest in the safety of eternal life while living in bodies that are as good as dead.

Ok, so our bodies are physically as good as dead.

Our bodies are also **morally dead**. Our bodies are in essence the seat of sin in our lives. We will struggle with the residual sin that our bodies

house until we die. If it were possible for us to live apart from our bodies, this struggle might end. I **wouldn't** suggest that as a solution though. I don't think it will work out well for you. But as long as we are housed in this body, we will have a fight.

Mr. Jones says at this point that, "A man's body constitutes the greatest problem in this world." So we need to adjust to this fact and face our lives with this realization. There is always work to do. There is always a war to fight.

Well praise God this is not the whole truth about a regenerate man. And Paul tells us what the rest of the truth is.

Paul says that **the body [is] dead because of sin, but the spirit [is] life because of righteousness.**

the spirit [is] life because of righteousness-

Just as the physical body is currently dead, so too is the spirit currently alive. The spirit of a believer is life RIGHT NOW. We don't have to wait until the future for what Paul speaks of here. We have it. Just as our bodies have the seeds of death, so too our spirits have the seeds of life. To understand this let's first take a look about what Paul has already said about this topic in Romans so far.

Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

What is the reason that the believer should not continue in sin? Because the believer has "died to sin". If the believer has "died to sin" the opposite of that statement must also be true. He is now alive to something that he was not previously alive to.

Verse 4- Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Verse 6- knowing this, that our old man was crucified with [Him], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

We saw in Romans already that the believer has a new man in him. He currently has life where he did not have life and he has death where he previously had some form of existence, some form of living.

Then Romans 6:11- **Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Notice how closely this verse parallels verse 10 in Romans 8. Notice too that the contrast of being dead to sin is being alive to God. If verse 10 in

Romans 8 is referring to the Holy Spirit and not the spirit of a believer this wouldn't be a parallel at all, and some of the flow of the whole book would be interrupted. But if the Spirit in verse 10 is the spirit of a believer, and not the Holy Spirit, these verses both lay out the same contrast, just using different words.

So we are to reckon ourselves to be alive to God in Christ Jesus. We are to reckon ourselves, to count ourselves in a cold hard mathematical calculation, as being alive in a way that we were not alive before. We are now alive to God. We are in a living relationship with God.

Romans 6:13 And do not present your members [as] instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members [as] instruments of righteousness to God.

Here again Paul tells us to present ourselves to God as being- currently, here and now, alive from the dead.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God (The gift we have already received.) [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Again we see that we have received, already, here and now, the eternal life in Christ. We have it. It is ours.

So we see in Romans that Paul has laid out the reasoning and appealed to it from beginning to end that it is the believer that has new life.

Now just to remove any doubt that it is the spirit of a believer, not the Holy Spirit that verse 10 is referring to, let's look at these verses next.

Colossians 3:1-3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

(What is Paul's reason for setting our minds on things above?)

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Paul doesn't tell us to do this because the life of the Holy Spirit is alive. He tells us to do this because it is we who have life.

the spirit [is] life because of righteousness

Now what does "because of righteousness" mean. This must be able to be tracked back to mean that our spirits have life because of this righteousness. This makes it easy to understand what righteousness this must be speaking of.

We have seen over and over that we cannot give ourselves life. We cannot earn eternal life. We cannot merit eternal life. And since there is nothing we can do to get it, we can safely assume that the righteousness referred to here must be the method by which we were given new life. And we know that there is only one way that this could have happened.

This is talking of the imputed righteousness that Christ gave to us by taking upon himself the full weight of the wrath of God that we deserved. So our spirits are now life, are now living, have the seeds of life because of the righteousness that was imputed to us in the atonement. We have life IN Christ because we have the righteousness OF Christ.

Now what does this all mean to us this morning?

I would like to make 2 applications.

- 1- We are victors in our battle against sin
- 2- We must continue to fight in our battle against sin

In most warfare the outcomes are uncertain. For example, in World War II it was difficult to determine, until close to the end, who was going to win. In our battle against the sin in our bodies this is not the case. Our victory is assured. Sin will not win. It cannot win. Because we have life in our bodies that sin cannot take away. Our position is a position of victory. In the end we know that Christ stands as victor in the battle against sin. In fact, in light of God's sovereignty, in some senses it isn't even a battle. Christ is already the victor. And we are in Christ. So the victory is assured. The victory is as good as ours. This is a war that we know the outcome before we become engaged in the warfare.

We know that our efforts will not, cannot be in vain.

Isn't it sweet to know the certainty of the end result. We do not need to worry. We don't need to fear. Romans lays out the logic in sentence after sentence that being "In Christ" is everything that matters. Being "In Christ" positionally puts everything into place operationally that we need to live the Christian life.

Romans 8:37 says Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

So we can rest assured that the war is as good as won.

So can we relax? Can we kick up our heels and say, "if the battle is as good as won, I don't need to lift a finger?". No. We live in bodies. And as

long as we live in bodies, we will have warfare. We have residual sin that is going to be a constant obstacle.

First- we have patterns of thinking, holdovers of our unregenerate lives, that need taken captive. These ideas and thoughts need locked up. They need to be labeled as unfitting to the new life we have, and placed in solitary confinement. This requires a moment by moment diligence.

Second we have natural impulses of these bodies we live in that must be kept in their ordinate limits. We must refrain from going to excesses that are sinful. We must keep from living in laziness or drunkenness or gluttony. These are just a few examples of the natural impulses of our bodies that can get us off track. These involve partaking of things that are not in themselves sinful. Eating and resting are necessary for survival. But even these desires can be indulged too much and lead us into sin.

And thirdly, we have impulses in these bodies to do things that are strictly forbidden, adultery and murder come to mind as simple examples. But there are plenty more.

All of these temptations reside in our bodies. And as long as we are in these bodies we will need to take care. We are to glorify God in our bodies. And that will take constant effort, constant diligence. It is a battle that we know we will win, and in some senses have already won. But it is a battle that still must be fought every day, all the time.

Let's praise God for the truths in Romans.

Since Christ [is] in us, our bodies are dead because of sin, but our spirits are life (here and now) because of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, He who raised Christ from the dead, He who raised Christ's dead body, will also give life to our mortal bodies (he will give life to our bodies. He has already given life to our spirits) through His Spirit who dwells in us (and he is dwelling in us here and now).