

WALKING ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT
November 12, 2017 Morning Service
Romans 8:1-11

It's often been said that if the word of God was a ring, Romans would be the diamond and Romans 8 would be the sparkle in the diamond. Romans 8, oh my, what power. We could preach for months and months out of Romans chapter 8. Now listen to me. If you're saved, if you've ever been born again, converted, when you got saved, you went into Christ and the Spirit of Christ came into you. When you get saved, you are placed in Christ and the Spirit of Christ is placed in you. It's what happens in your spirit when you get saved. You are body, you are soul, and you are spirit. You know your body. You can see that. You're a soul, you're a mind, a will. Emotion is in your soul. Your dog has a soul. A mind, a will, and an emotion.

If you don't believe that just check that dog out sometime. If you rub him behind the ears and feed him, the back end of that thing goes crazy. You let somebody come in he doesn't know and mess with him, the other end of that thing goes crazy. They've got a mind, a will. There's emotion that's involved in that but only man, only men and women God made to be spirit. When you come into this world you come spiritually dead because when Adam sinned, we all sinned. When Adam died, we all died in our spirit but when you get saved you are born again. Your spirit literally is raised from the dead and you are placed into Christ and the Spirit of Christ is placed into you. In that you must then learn to navigate between the flesh life that is still here and the Spirit life and that is the whole of Romans chapter 8.

So let's look at it in Romans 8, the first eleven verses this morning where we'll begin and we will be here for a few weeks right up until Christmas Eve. Paul says in Romans 8, verse 1:

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. [Friend, if you've not been condemned you ought to say Amen. People may condemn you. You may condemn yourself but let me tell you, God does not condemn you when you are found in Christ. There is affirmation there that you have been made spiritually alive. Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.] For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did [You ought to underline those two words. God did. You couldn't save yourself. God did. You couldn't make it through. God did]: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 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.¹

When you get saved and if you've never been saved you ought to trust Christ today. Jesus died for you. He said, "Whosoever will let him come to me." He said, "I'm the door and anyone who enters in will be saved," according to John 10 and verse number 9. When you get saved you enter into Christ and the Spirit of Christ enters into you.

The whole of the Old Testament is replete with illustrations about our redemption. One of the greatest is found early in Genesis 6 and Genesis 7 where God decides to destroy the whole earth that He's made because of the wickedness of mankind. He tells Noah to build an ark and he does. In the 7th chapter, verse 1, God says to Noah, "The door is open. Enter in." He goes into the ark and in chapter 7, verse 14 we find the Bible saying that God shut the door. Genesis 7 and verse 16. God shut the door. He opened and said, "Come in." Noah and his family went in and then in verse 16 he shut the door.

The Bible says in Genesis 6 and verse 14 that God told Noah to build an ark. He told him to make it of gopher wood and he told him the dimensions and then he said to pitch it. Pitch. Cover the outside and the inside. The outside hull and the inside of the boat with pitch. It is the Hebrew word kofer. K-O-F-E-R. Kofer. It is translated pitch and it is the same word – it's unbelievable – it is the same word used for redemption or atonement.

Get the picture. When Noah and his family went into the ark God shut the door and he had put the pitch outward and inward and the storm could not get in the boat because redemption held it away. Let me tell you, friend, when you get saved as Peter picked up on this in I Peter, he said, "Jesus is our ark," and when you enter into Jesus you are safe forever and ever and ever because the redemption that holds you in keeps the world out and you are saved, safe, and secure. It's the glory of God. It's the glory of God. You go into Christ and Christ comes through His Spirit into you and there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ.

Here's the question for you sitting in this service at 11:00. Olive Baptist Church, here's the question for you. Are you in Christ or outside of Christ? Everyone in this room stands on one side of that door. It's the door of redemption. Are you in it or have you excluded yourself from it? You have been called but not entered. You say, "Another time when I get old, when I understand more," and Jesus says, "Come." I'm

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going to give you an invitation at the end of this service in just a few minutes. I'm going to stand right here and I'm going to ask you to get out of that balcony. I'm going to ask you to come talk to me right here. You say, "Pastor, I'm ready. I'm ready today to enter." Some of you are going to wait until after this service. You'll go out to those next step tables. Somebody will be there glad to talk to you but I'm going to stand here at the front this morning and ask you to come and enter in. When you believe and when you enter, then you go into Christ and the Spirit of Christ comes into you.

Most Baptists are like I was as a young boy getting saved at ten. I entered Christ and I thought, "Okay, it's all done. Now all I've got to do is live and just do the best I can and one day I'll die and go to heaven." We think we get saved by faith but we have to fight for sanctification. Friend, you get saved by faith and you're sanctified by faith. You've got to claim who you are not only in Christ but claim that Christ is in you and learn to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Walking according to the Spirit is what we glean from this text. I could preach for a long time out of these eleven verses but I just want to mine three simple thoughts out of here this morning and encourage you about the Holy Spirit in us as believers. If you're not a believer, you don't have the Spirit but if you believe the Spirit is in you, I want to show you what the Spirit wants to do in your life as you walk according to the Spirit.

Number one. First of all, I want you to see the Holy Spirit controlling the mind of the believer. The mind of the believer. Notice in verse 5. *For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.* When you get saved you'll have a decision. You've got to learn to walk in the Spirit, walking according to the spiritual truth of God or reverting back to just trusting your flesh.

Now listen to me. Your flesh can be educated. Thank God that we can be smart. Your flesh can be refined. Amen. You can look better. Your flesh can be cultured. Lord, I know a lot of people in this world. Educated, refined, and cultured but they don't walk in the Spirit of God. We have to be very careful sending our young people off to college. They'll get educated. They'll get cultured. They'll be refined but they'll miss the Spirit of God. They'll come home trying to tell you how things really are if they lose the spiritual side. There is nothing worse than flesh religion. You see, not only can we be educated, refined, and cultured, you can have a flesh religion and all that flesh religion does is have an outward ceremony of observances. It's just all external. You sing the songs, you give the money, you walk through the water, you take the Lord's Supper. It's all external. Those are not bad things unless they're the only thing. Your religion, a true religion is not one of external observances only. It is an internal fire that burns within you that sets ablaze those externals to show the picture of who Christ really is.

Be very careful you don't walk in a flesh religion. The Holy Spirit should be controlling the mind of the believer. It is the way we think. He tells us here. You set

your mind on the flesh. You set your mind on the Spirit. One of the two. One is death. One is life. One is hostile to God. One is pleasing to God.

I Corinthians 2:16 tells us. We ask this question. *For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him?* [Have you ever tried to teach God? I do. Lord, let me help you out. Let me tell you how it is down here in Pensacola. You may not know but over here in this little corner of Florida things are different. Who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will instruct Him?] *But we have the mind of Christ.*

It's not what you think. It's not your opinion. As a matter of fact, you ought not give a flip about your opinion. You ought to want to know, "What is God's opinion?" You walk with your mind according to what God says. Not what you say. What God says. You make God's thoughts your thoughts.

It goes on in Philippians chapter 2, one of the greatest texts on the mind of Christ in Philippians 2:5. *Have this attitude [or this mind] in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.* You know the rest of that text how that He did not think that equality with God was something to be grasped but He emptied Himself and He gave Himself and He became in the flesh like a man when Jesus came here. Then He submitted Himself to death, even death on the cross. You see, to have the attitude of Christ is to have the mind of service, of submission, of sacrifice. It's not what you think.

I'll have people walk up to me and say, "You know, pastor, I think...." Well if what you think is not backed by what God thinks, your opinion's not worth much. The Holy Spirit is to take our minds and we are to think as God thinks. We are to walk according to the Spirit in our mind. That means in our mind we serve. That's what Jesus did. That was His mindset. He was in submission. We ought to be in submission unto God Himself and we ought to serve. Have a mind that serves one another.

Oh I see people get bitter in church. They get aggravated and say, "You know, I don't like this. I don't think that's the way we ought to do it. My opinion is...." Well thank God for thinking people but, friend, you've got to submit your mind to God's mind. That's what I have to do. It's what we all must do. If we're going to walk in the Spirit, we've got a choice. We can walk in the Spirit or walk in the flesh.

So we see first of all the Holy Spirit controlling the mind. Number two. He says, see secondly the Holy Spirit controlling the motives, the motives of the believer. It's found in verses 8 and 9. Notice what he said. *And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.*

If you don't have Christ's Spirit you're lost but if you have the Spirit of God then your motive should be one. Here's your motive. If you have one motive, one motive, pleasing the Lord God. Amen. It's what he says right here in verse number 8. If you

are in the flesh, you don't please God but, friend, if you're in the Spirit, the converse of that, be pleasing unto God.

I like people to like me. Don't you like people to like you? Amen. My job's not to get to the place that I please you to the place where you like me. My first order of the day is to please the Lord God. He is my Maker. He is my Redeemer. He is my King. He is my All. You'll walk off and leave me when the kitchen gets hot but God will stay in the kitchen. So my first motivation is to please the Lord.

Listen to me. There is nothing quite as nauseating or pathetic as the flesh trying to be holy under its own power. Nothing is quite as nauseating or pathetic as the flesh trying to be holy under its own power. Friend, you have a decision to make. You will either be egocentric or Deocentric. Egocentric is self-centered. It's all about you. Everything revolves around you. Or Deo, it's God. Deocentric, everything revolves around the Lord. Which one is it? Which solar system are you walking in? Egocentric or Deocentric? The choice is yours as a believer. You will either walk in the power of the flesh or in the power of the Spirit. Some of the saddest people in all the world are those that say they're saved and yet they walk according to the flesh, just trying to get their way all the time. When you come to the end of yourself and the beginning, God can do so much in a short period of time with one surrendered unto Him. You must decide. Egocentric or Deocentric. Which one are you?

The Holy Spirit. See Him controlling the motives of the believer. See Him controlling the mind of the believer. Number three, I want you to see Him, number three, controlling the movements of the believer. Notice it in verse 10 and 11. *If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 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 [What? Say those two words out loud. He'll give life to your what?] mortal bodies [Say those two words again. Mortal bodies] through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

Your hands become His hands. Your feet become His feet. Your eyes become His eyes. Listen to what the word of God says in I Corinthians 3 and verse 16. It asks the question. *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells [where?] in you?* When you get saved you go into Christ and the Spirit of Christ comes into you. You are His temple. God lives in you. From the top of your head to the soles of your feet, you become the temple of God. He lives in you. I Corinthians 6:19, Paul says it again: *Or do you not know [He asked this question like we must be thickheaded. Do you not know] that your body [your body] is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is [Where?] in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? He bought you with a price. You don't belong to yourself. You belong to God when you're saved and His spirit then is in you and He controls the movements.*

What are you doing with your hands? Where are you working? What are you writing? What are you handling? He controls your feet. Where are you going? Your feet ought to be God's feet. Your mortal body. Your eyes. Your eyes. You can cut

somebody apart with your eyes. You can. You can just take your eyes. I'm amazed at singers who sing with their eyes closed all the time. It's one of the most powerful expressions you have are your eyes. I've often thought, what if I preached for 30 minutes with my eyes closed? I'd look up and the building would be empty and I wouldn't even know. There are times you use your eyes. There are times you can look at a friend and you don't have to say a word. Your mamma's got it, hasn't she? Amen? Oh yeah.

Your hands, your feet, your eyes, but oh, your tongue. The word of God says that the tongue is the smallest member of the body but it's set on fire, the fire of hell. Oh the things we can say. It haunts me sometimes the words I heard Dr. W. A. Criswell thunder in an auditorium years ago when someone asked him, "Preacher, have you ever said anything you shouldn't have said?" I'll never forget the old prophet. He said, "My Lord, I have screamed things in public that should not have been whispered behind closed doors." I said, "O, God, guard my tongue. Guard my tongue."

Walk according to the Spirit. Friend, you must learn to let the Spirit have His way. The Bible says to pray without ceasing. Does that mean you just go in your closet and stay in there all the time like a monastic and never come out? No, no, no. What that means is bring everything in your life immediately to the feet of Jesus.

I had to do it after the service this morning. I had someone come down and they were trying to give me a piece of advice and giving the preacher advice during the invitation is really not smart. Do you understand what I'm saying? There's a time for everything and there was a couple standing there. I could tell they were hungry and yet I was getting this advice. I had just preached about controlling of the Spirit. So I pray without ceasing. I had to bring that to the feet of Jesus. I submit that to you and listen and be quiet. That's how you pray without ceasing. You bring it all to the feet of Jesus.

It's amazing sometimes when you bring it to Him how He can handle that situation for you. I want to do it in the flesh. No, no. Just let God do it. Don't walk according to the flesh. Walk according to the Spirit. Aren't we spiritual people? Isn't that what we believe? We believe God can handle it. There are times He gives you actions to take but you better know when He's giving you direction. Where your feet go, where your hands go, where your eyes look. What your mouth speaks. You see, the Holy Spirit controlling our movements in our life. Whether up or down, left or right, God is to control, to control, to control all of our movements.

In the word of God there are three great pictures of this deal of you in Christ and His Spirit in you. Three wonderful, metaphorical pictures that the Bible gives us. Number one is John 15 with the vine and the branches. The branches come out of the vine and the vine goes down into the ground and the feeding of the vine is there and it is strong and then out of there comes the branches. You see, the key is – and he goes on to say that, "I am the vine. You are the branches." When you're walking in the flesh, you pray this way. Lord, I am in the vine. You are the branches. That won't work

because you have no Holy Ghost sap in you to give to Him but He has the power in Him to give to you. Make sure you as the branch are tied to the vine.

In my house I have one orange tree. Just this week I noticed there's just a little bit of orange beginning to crack in the green. It's still real green but a little ray of orange in there. We had a party at our house yesterday. We had most of our staff over. We were all eating outside and I'd noticed we had some fruit up in the tree. There was one branch that hung way down low. We were out eating and when Liz came by I noticed it was gone. I said, "Did you cut one of the limbs off?" It had four big oranges on it. She said, "Yeah, it just kept hitting everybody in the head when you'd come by." I said, "So you just cut it off?" She said, "Well yeah, it was in the way, you know." Bring all things unto the Lord by prayer and supplication. I said, "Well, you know, messing with my orange tree." She said, "Our orange tree." Oh yeah.

I want you to know – we laugh about that but I've seen people divorce over less because it started – be careful. He's the vine, you're the branch, and the fruit just hangs on you. Love, joy, peace, gentleness. Amen? You can't make fruit. As a matter of fact, most church members I know are fruitless Baptists. The fruit comes because you're tied back to the vine that's tied to the nutriment that comes out of the ground. That's the picture, number one. The vine and branches.

Number two. He gives us the illustration in scripture of the head and the body from Ephesians. Jesus is the head and everything comes out of the body and out of the head into the body. It's amazing this thing that we live in. This is remarkable. I mean you just think, if you can just raise your left foot, you can just do it. Just throw your hand up in the air. It's just amazing what your body will do. You can cut your right arm off and live. You can cut your right foot off and live. If you cut your head off, you're not going to make it. He's the head, not you. Jesus is the head. We become His body and all of it, all the life comes through that. Make sure you know, dear friend, who you are and who He is. Branches and the vine, the body ruled by the head.

Then He gives a third illustration in scripture and that is of the bride and the groom. Better said, the groom and the bride. Jesus is the groom. We become the bride of Christ. A man normally finds that lady and asks her to marry. They come to the altar and they make their commitments. They are two become one. Equal with different roles but now hear me, the illustration Jesus uses. He is the groom and we become the bride of Christ and He leads and we follow.

I was with a young couple getting engaged the weekend before last. He was scared to death. I was with his family and I was watching through the bushes as he was going to kneel down. This guy's a captain in the Air Force. He was scared to death. I've never seen a man so scared. Well maybe when I looked at myself 41 years ago I saw somebody who was scared. He asked me. I'll never forget it. He said, "Pastor, I'm going to kneel down. Which knee do I kneel down on?" I said, "If you're going to give it to her in your right hand, kneel on your left knee." I don't know if that made any sense. I was just trying to help him. I said, "If you're not sure what she's going to say get on

both knees. Beg in Jesus' name." She squealed and said yes. I'll do their wedding here in six months.

Forty-one years ago when I was going to ask my wife to marry me, I got in to stay. Nobody I know gets in to get out. Some people do get out and we know that difficulty comes but the picture, the picture is the faithfulness of the groom and the faithfulness of the bride. I want you to know, when Jesus got in with this deal He never gets out. He is faithful to the end. You may walk off. He does not walk off.

Today if you've never been wed to Christ, you should run to the altar and say, "O God, I come to give you my life. I give you my life." Vine and branches, head and body, groom and bride, we find those pictures all through scripture. We are in Christ and the Spirit of Christ is in us. Friends, walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh. You have a choice but you must learn to walk in the Spirit. You must learn to please the Father and be a spiritual, not a fleshly being.

Now listen to me. If you've never entered, if you've never entered into Christ, today's the day you need to do that. In just a moment I'm going to invite you to get up out of your seat and walk right here, take me by the hand and say, "Pastor, I'm ready today." Now watch this. Watch this. In John's gospel chapter 10, verse number 9, Jesus says: I am the door; and anyone enters will be saved. Got it? He's a door. Anyone that enters in will be saved. But that's not the end of the verse. Most Baptists stop right there and put a period. He's a door. We enter in and we get saved. Hallelujah. Let's go home. No, no, no, no. There's another phrase and we have never read it. If you've never been saved the door stands open today. Jesus says, "Come unto me. Whosoever will come will be saved."

The end of the verse says, "And you will go out and come in and go out and come in and go out and come in and find pasture." It's like a sheep. He's the door. He would literally lie down, the shepherd would, and he would get out and the sheep would come in. They'd be safe. That's the picture of salvation but you don't live in the pen. You go out and you come in. You go out. That's the Spirit life. That's walking in the Spirit. It's going where God wants you to go and wherever you are, at school, at work, at church, at recreation. Mark this down, friend, sports will squeeze you to the place that you'll find out what's inside of you when you get into sports. Oh yeah. The real you will just pop out. That's what they tell me. I don't know anything about that but I've been told. That's what they say.

You see, when you get saved, most people I know they say, "Well I'll just walk in. I'm in the pen. That's the end of it." No, that's not the end of it. We've got to learn to walk in the Spirit life and as we go out, God's got something for us to do. He has a ministry for us to have. I'm not the only one here called to ministry. Everybody in this place is called to ministry. Everyone. Wherever you go, if you work at Gulf Power you've got a ministry out there. If you work in the school system you've got a ministry out there. If you work downtown in a building, you've got a ministry in there. If you work in a dental office, you've got a ministry in there. Wherever you are, I'm telling you,

there's a ministry for you. That's where you go out and you come in, you go out and you come in. You come here and you find strength. You're in the word of God every morning. You're walking in the Spirit life and God opens us the doors.

Last week I talked to a couple. They came to our church for the first time. I was not here. Shaun was preaching. I was back the next day and that evening and I went and knocked on their door the next night, Monday night. They invited me in. I said, "I'm the pastor of the church where you attended. I'm the one that was not there. I'm glad you were." So I asked them, "How'd you come to Olive?" They said, "Well there was," and they told me the name of the individual that had encountered them and had really wooed them and encouraged them. They had a ministry to them. They'd not been to church in years. They said, "We just decided it was time to get our family and our children back in church." I thought, "I need to share the gospel here. I need to try to get it." I thought, how am I going to do this because there's three kids and there's people all around? There was a little girl sitting there.

Somebody evidently got baptized in the service and she said something about somebody being baptized. I said, "Yeah." She looked at her mother straightaway. She was ten years old. She said, "Can I be baptized?" Her mother said, "Well you'll have to learn." She looked up at me. She said, "What do you have to learn?" I'm just praying in the Spirit saying, "O God, give me an opening." God raised it up. I said, "Well let me explain how that happened." So I just walked through the gospel, how you trust Christ and you understand Jesus died for us and when we get saved then the pastor lowers us in the water just like we saw these two in this service. That's mindful of Jesus dying and being buried for us and raised out of the water. It's mindful of His resurrection and how He overcame sin for us. I just tried to walk through the gospel.

How did they come to church? They came because somebody in this church that's never been to seminary or a Bible school across the back fence said, "Come to my church." That's how that works. God raises up a ministry and everybody in this place. Well He doesn't raise it up to everybody in this place because most of us are walking in the flesh, not the Spirit.

I told you about that Jewish man I met that was in a church up in Georgia where I preached. He said, "Pastor, most of the church is carnal, walking in the flesh, and God needs all of them because they'll give their money so we can build buildings and do what God wants us to do." I said, "I wish I'd have thought of that." You see, it's that external thing. There's an external. There's a fleshly religion. It's filled without – but that inner man. A deep, deep moving when you can't get away from it. Oh the Spirit of God rips your soul. You can't move.

I had to slip out. It was the first song. I went out here and as I was going there was a couple. They came forward in the first service. A gentleman grabbed me. He said, "I was hoping I'd see you." He said, "God grabbed my heart today." That's where God wants to grab you, friend. He wants to grab your heart.