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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

I’m preaching through the book of Romans, verse after verse, and I personally believe if you could compare the whole Bible to a mountain range, then the book of Romans would definitely be the Himalayan mountains and Romans, Chapter 8, would be the Mount Everest towering over all the rest of scripture. In my personal opinion, chapter 8 in the book of Romans gives us the key to living the victorious Christian life. If you need something to jump-start your level of excitability about the Lord, I challenge you to just read Romans 8 every morning for about a month and you will be amazed at what will happen to your own Christian walk.

One of the concerns we all have is we want to always try to “do” the right thing. I’ve told you before one of my very favorite American presidents was Calvin Coolidge—old ‘Silent Cal.’ There was occasion one night at a White House dinner and Calvin Coolidge was at the head of the table. On either side of the table, there were about a dozen dignitaries and everything was going great until they served coffee at the end of the meal. Calvin Coolidge committed a terrible breach of social etiquette: he poured his coffee into a saucer and began to blow on it. He even added a little cream and sugar. Everyone at the table was aghast because that was something so uncouth—but because the President was doing it, every single one of them poured their coffee into their saucers and began to blow on it. You can imagine their consternation when suddenly he bent over and put it on the floor for his cat! We always want to try and do the right thing!

One way to do it is try and look at Jesus and ask the question “What would Jesus do?” Whatever you think Jesus would do you try and imitate him and that’s one way, but that can get pretty frustrating, because we don’t always know what Jesus would do, and we can’t always do what Jesus would do. There’s a better way. That is to surrender to the spirit of Jesus who lives inside of us by the Holy Spirit. This is what today’s passage is all about.

I want to talk to you today about how your mindset determines your lifestyle. Because the two key concepts in this passage are your mind and then the spirit of Christ. Begin reading in verse 5, Romans 8: “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires, but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death. But the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace! Because the sinful mind is hostile to God it does not submit to God’s law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.” In verse 9, though, he’s talking directly to the Christians there in Rome, and so he’s talking directly to us when he says, “You, however are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ he does not belong to Christ. But if (and this phrase could be translated ‘since’) ...but since Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if (or since) 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. Through His Spirit, who lives in you.”

I. MINDSET ON SIN—DEADLY LIFESTYLE

Now, a different mindset can determine your entire lifestyle or your entire destiny. Paul is contrasting between a mind set on sin and a mind set on following the Holy Spirit. I want to take

a little time to talk about a mind set on sin. It produces what we could call a deadly lifestyle. It's not a lifestyle at all—it's a death style. Paul is writing about that in verses 5 through 8. Let's notice three things about these kinds of people he's talking about. These are the people we would call "unbelievers," or non-Christians. First of all...those people (notice he says 'those people'—third person) can't please God. That's what Paul says in verse 8. He says, "Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God." I call this frustration without faith. Surveys tell us most people in America believes in God. Most people in America really want to try and please God. But if they don't have faith it is just a constant frustrating experience, because most people think the way you please God is by ceasing to do "wrong things," stopping the sinful faults we all have, cleaning up our acts, or getting it all together. And the thing we learn in the book of Romans is we don't have the power to do that!

I want you to think about your sins, your failures and your mistakes like some of the dead leaves falling off the trees. You can't help but drive through Tyler and see all the leaves falling; they're on the streets, on the yards, some of you have been raking or blowing them off the streets and yards. Somebody who knows a lot more about trees than I do told me one time dead leaves do not fall off trees! Did you know that? They get pushed off. This person said, "If you don't believe that, take a branch off of a tree, one that's been cut or cracked off—and when it falls to the ground the leaves are still attached. Those leaves won't ever separate from that branch. They'll just hang on there through summertime, through the next year. The thing that makes leaves fall is the life inside the tree. As the point of the branch that holds that old leaf on it is getting ready to produce life in the spring, it hardens and closes and literally pushes off the old dead leaves."

1. "Those" people can't please God: Frustration without faith

There's a great lesson in that. We spend a lot of our time trying to push off a lot of things in our lives we shouldn't have; to get rid of those bad thoughts, get rid of those bad deeds and get rid of those bad habits! The easiest way is to allow the life of Jesus in us to push them away, to replace those bad, dead leaves with the new life of the Holy Spirit. If you don't understand that great truth, you're going to walk around frustrated much of your spiritual life. Look at what it says in Romans 11:6. This is a foundational verse about faith and pleasing God: it says, "And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe he exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek him." Now Paul is writing this and he is saying, "Listen. Those folks who are minding sin can't please God because they don't have faith!"

Here's the second thing he says about these kinds of people.

2. "Those" people don't know God: Profession without possession

I call this profession without possession. Look back at the second part of verse 9 where it says, "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." Now, whether or not you like it there are only two kinds of people on the earth: those who belong to Christ and those who don't belong to Christ. How can you distinguish one group from the other? There it is in verse 9 where it says if a person does not possess the Spirit of Christ they don't belong to Christ. Did you know there are multitudes of people who would profess they are Christians but you can profess you are a Christian without possessing the life of God in you? You ask if that's possible?

Not only is it possible, but it's probable. To me, some of the scariest words the Lord Jesus ever spoke are in Matthew 7:21 where he says, “Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father which is in Heaven.” I have said many times it's not religion that saves a person; it's a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that saves a person. You can profess all day long you are a Christian and a believer and a follower of God, but if you don't possess the life of God in you in the person of the Holy Spirit, the Bible says you don't belong to Christ. So Paul talks about people who have frustration without faith, who have profession without possession, and then says something else about ‘those’ people.

3. “Those” people don't submit to God: Living without life

I say these people are living without life. In fact in verse 6 it says, “The mind of sinful man is death.” In verse 7 it says, “That mind is hostile to God...it cannot submit to God's laws.” You may ask, “How can a person live without life?” Well you have to understand in the New Testament there are two different words for ‘life.’ You see in English we just have one word for life, but in the Greek language in which the New Testament is written, there is a word for life is “*bios*.” Do you recognize that word? We get our word biology, or biological from it. That speaks of just physical life, but in the New Testament there's another word for life, the word is *zoe*. This is the word used most often to speak about a quality of life—about a spiritual life. For instance, in John 10:10 when Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life,” he wasn't talking about biology. He said, “I have come that you might have a quality of life (*zoe*) and you might enjoy it to the fullest.” There are a lot of people who have ‘*bios*’ but do not have the real *zoe* Jesus promises. In fact, one of the most fascinating verses in all of the Bible is 1 Timothy 5:6 where the apostle Paul is writing to young Timothy about a certain woman who is living only for pleasure and he makes this observation, “But she (and this could be true of ‘he’ as well) who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.”

By the way, do you know anyone who may look like they're living but they're dead? They are spiritually dead? Living without life? Years ago I heard a supposedly true story about a Texas millionaire who died. He was such a selfish lonely kind of guy he didn't want to leave anything behind so he left very specific orders that when he died he to be buried in his Cadillac! A lot of his possessions and cash and everything was to be put in that Cadillac with him. So here he was, they had to dig a huge hole and had to life up this Cadillac with a crane with him, embalmed, sitting behind the wheel with all of his possessions in that car. You could look through the windows and see cash piled up. As they were lowering this Cadillac into the ground one old fellow turned to his friend and said, “Man...that's really living isn't it?” Well, some people thing that's living, but we know that's nothing but death. There are a lot of people who are living, but who don't have life! If you don't have Jesus, you don't have life. I'm here to tell you—life doesn't begin at 40, life begins with Jesus—whatever age you may be when you meet him. That's when *zoe* (life) begins. So first of all, Paul speaks about that kind of mind set. But secondly, let's talk about the correct mindset that produces the correct lifestyle.

II. MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT—LIFESTYLE OF PEACE

He talks about the mind set on the spirit produces a lifestyle of peace. Look again at verse 6, the

second half of verse 6, where he says, "The mind controlled by the Spirit is life "zoi" and peace." Doesn't that sound attractive? Is there anyone who really doesn't want to live a life that's full of tranquility, security, serenity, peace with God and with the peace of God? The only way you can do that is to have your mind set on the Spirit. That kind of mindset produces the right kind of lifestyle.

Let's look at, "The lifestyles of the redeemed and the faithful," because this is what we're talking about. If you're full of the Spirit you are faithful, you are redeemed, and you have a different kind of lifestyle; you have a lifestyle in the Spirit. Paul is going to say three things about the Holy Spirit's relationship to a Christian. Please understand, again, Romans 8 is all about the Holy Spirit. In the first 7 chapters of Romans he only mentions the Spirit twice. In Romans Chapter 8 he's going to mention the Holy Spirit 21 times! Now in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit has different titles: he's called "The Spirit," the "Spirit of God," the "Spirit of Christ," the "Holy Spirit," the "Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Grace, the Spirit of Promise, the Spirit of Glory, the Eternal Spirit," and he's also called "The Comforter," or "The Councilor," (the word is *paraclete*—the one called alongside) which is what Jesus used when he's talking about the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Let's notice three ways the Holy spirit relates to us as Christians: In verse 9, he says, "we are indwelt by the spirit," four times in this passage he says, "the Holy Spirit lives in you...the Spirit lives in you.... The Spirit lives in you...when you become a Christian the very spirit of God indwells you."

1. "You" (Believers) are indwelt by the Spirit

Now let's read John Chapter 14, verse 17 where Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit to his disciples. This is when he was alive on planet earth living in his human body. He says, "Now the Spirit of truth is coming, the world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him, but you know him for he lives (and notice the prepositions) with you and he will be in you. On that day you will realize that I am in my father, you are in me (again, notice the prepositions) and I am in you." Now let me tell you something fascinating. When Jesus was alive in a human body for 33 years, he couldn't be but at one place at any one time. For instance, when he was in Galilee with his disciples, he couldn't be in Jerusalem! He could only be in one place at one time. He says, "Now I am with you, but when the Holy Spirit comes he will be in you (or literally, I will be in you)." We become, literally, the dwelling place for the spirit of God when you become a Christian. Not only does it talk here in John 14, but in another very familiar passage. In 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul says, "What, don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God," you're not your own. What that means is, this building we are in right now is not the house of God, it's not the temple of God. As a believer, a Christian, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

You know, a few years ago, we had a little problem at our church because people were smoking in the building, sometimes, and although our policy states very clearly not to smoke in the buildings, we discovered they would go into the bathrooms downstairs and light up. I suppose they thought it was okay to do it in the bathroom, but not in this room. So, someone put up a sign in the bathroom that read, "Please do not smoke in the house of God." They thought that might work. Well, someone came along and added a little commentary to that sign and whoever did it understood their theology correctly because they wrote, "The house of God is your body, not a

bathroom!” And that’s true! This building is not the house of God. You see, in the Old Testament, God had a temple for his people but in the New Testament he has a people for his temple! You must understand the Spirit of God lives inside a Christian and we are to mind that Spirit. I’m glad I grew up in the south, because we can use words differently than other people do; for instance, for us southerners the word “mind” can be both a verb and a noun! We know the word “mind” when used as a verb means pay attention to and obey. That’s what Paul is saying here (he came from southern Israel, trust me) “I want you to ‘mind’ the Holy Spirit.” Put your mind on the Holy Spirit and pay attention to him and obey him. First of all, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

2. “You” (Believers) are filled (controlled) with the Spirit

The Bible teaches we, as believers, are to be filled, or controlled, with the Spirit. Please look at verse 9. Paul is making an observation here, when he says, “Now you believers, you are not controlled by the sinful nature...instead you are controlled by the Spirit.” It is very important Christians be filled with the Spirit. You may say, “Now wait a minute, isn’t being indwelt by the Spirit the same thing as being filled with the Spirit?” I don’t think so. In fact, look at Ephesians 5:18 where it says, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, instead be filled with the Spirit!” My observation is that **a believer is always indwelt by the Spirit—but not always filled with the Spirit. Why not?** You may ask, “Wait a minute, does that mean when I become Christian and the Holy Spirit indwells me then later on, I get more of the Spirit of God?” No. You never get any more of the Spirit, but the truth is, he gets more of you! You surrender more to Him. You give more allegiance and obedience to the Holy Spirit and so being filled with the Holy Spirit is not getting more of God—it’s God getting more of you! Do you understand? To the point where you are controlled by the Holy Spirit. Let’s face it. Everyone in this room who is a Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but are you always controlled by the Holy Spirit? No. Because sometimes your mind listens to that old sinful nature! The choice is yours and mine. We can listen to that old sinful nature, or we can ‘mind’ the Holy Spirit and allow him to control us.

Please look at that verse again (Ephesians 5:18). Why do you think the apostle Paul said, “Don’t be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit,?” Think about it. Why didn’t he just say, “Don’t commit adultery but be filled with the Spirit.” Why didn’t he say, “Don’t steal, but be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Here’s the point. Why didn’t he say, “Don’t lie, but be filled with the Spirit.” Because when he said, “Don’t be drunk with wine,” he was making both a contrast and a comparison. I’m sure you know someone who’s been drunk at some time or another and what that means is that person is “under the influence.” Correct? In Texas and in every state it is a crime to drive an automobile when you are, “under the influence”—under the control—of alcohol because most of us realize when a person is under the influence of alcohol (controlled by alcohol) they act differently. They don’t use the same judgment. They are emboldened to do things they would never ordinarily do, like put a lampshade on their heads, or something. Well the Bible says being filled with the Holy Spirit is somewhat like being drunk with wine in that you are under the influence of the Spirit of God, but it doesn’t make you do bad things: it makes you do good things. It gives you a spiritual boldness, an empowerment. So it is both a contrast and a comparison.

Now you may ask why I’m telling you that Christians are always indwelt by the Spirit but not

always filled with the Spirit...this is why: nowhere in the New Testament are you commanded to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Do you know why? Because as a Christian, you are indwelt. But several times in the New Testament we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and this is one of those times. "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." God wouldn't command us to do something if it just automatically happened. So, when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you have totally surrendered to the Holy Spirit and that's when the life of Christ is being reproduced in you. That's when the personality of Jesus Christ is flowing through you. That's when the fruit of the Spirit is exhibited in your life—love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self-control, it's just there! You are surrendered to the Spirit. So let me share with you that the key to the Christian life is not looking at Jesus and trying to imitate him. The key to the Christian life is surrendering to the Spirit of Jesus living inside of us, yielding to him and allowing him to live his life through us. Why aren't more Christians filled with the Holy Spirit?

a. Ignorance

I'll give you three quick reasons. Number one is just ignorance. Perhaps you did not know what I have just told you, that is a command for every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

b. Unbelief

There are some Christians who don't believe God the Holy Spirit can control them. They still think they have to do it all themselves; they're still trying to work in the flesh—and they're guilty of the sin of unbelief, and the Bible says, "Be careful that there not be a hardened heart of unbelief in any of you so that you don't claim the promise."

c. Unconfessed sin

He is the Holy Spirit, which means he produces holy living, holy thoughts; holy motives in us and if there is unconfessed sin in your life you won't be filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. "YOU" (BELIEVERS) ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

So, number one, the Holy Spirit indwells us. Number two; the Holy Spirit wants to fill us. Number three; the Holy Spirit wants to renew us. Believers should be renewed by the spirit (verse 11) "If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you he who raised Christ from the dead (now this is future tense) will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you." You may ask what Paul is talking about, well it's that what the Holy Spirit wants to do as he dwells in us and as he fills us, he wants to renew us, he wants to change us, he wants to keep on transforming us, conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ. How does he do that? I think in at least two ways, first of all there's what I call "daily renewal," which is found described in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Therefore, we do not lose heart (don't get discouraged) though outwardly we are wasting away." What does that mean? That means your body is growing older—it is wasting away—but don't be afraid, keep on reading. "Yet inwardly we are being renewed day, by day, by day, by day." The Christian life is an exciting experience of daily allowing the Holy Spirit to renew us. For those of you who are thinking the Christian life is just getting-Jesus-in-your-heart-and-have-your-sins-forgiven-so-you-can-go-to-Heaven-whenyou-

die; you're missing the whole point! The Christian life is a daily experience of renewal.

a. Daily life!

Remember in the Old Testament where God gave manna to the children of Israel? Food to refresh and to nourish them? Remember, yesterday's manna was no good—it got rotten. You couldn't save yesterday's manna until the next day, you had to go out every day and get a fresh pot of manna. The same is true with your relationship with God. The problem with some is the reason you're stale and dry and cold and indifferent is you're trying to depend on manna from 10 or 20 years ago! You haven't understood it's a daily walk in the Spirit. That's just one part of it: daily renewal.

b. Future life!

There is future renewal and that's what verse 11 is talking about. When one day, "even our mortal bodies will receive life." You wonder what that means? Mortal bodies? Well it means the body you and I live in is wasting away, getting old—it's deteriorating. As you know, I've been pastor of this church for several years, and I've been standing up here looking at you and some of you are changing—you're getting old, did you know that? I see a lot more gray hair than I used to! When I look in the mirror! I look in my mirror and ask, "Who is that old guy looking back at me?" I'm getting old. Some of my hair is turning gray and some of it is turning loose! We are all getting old and have you noticed your bodies hurt more than it used to? Recently we were moving boxes out of our attic and I was hauling boxes and the last thing I did was let my foot slip and I stuck my foot right through the ceiling of our garage! Cindy walked into the garage and all she saw was my leg dangling down and she broke out laughing...no sympathy! Finally, I was able to extricate myself from that predicament and I couldn't believe how sore I was for the next couple of days. I could hardly walk around! I was so sore, from just that little fall. Ten years ago I wouldn't have hurt as much. And that's what the Bible means when it says our bodies are mortal. They hurt, they grow old. But the Bible says one day the Spirit is even going to give life to that mortal body. What that means is if we're alive when Jesus comes back we will immediately receive a resurrection body for all eternity. If you die and you're buried, your spirit or soul goes immediately to be with Jesus, and then when he comes back he'll even take the corpse (what's left behind of that mortal body) and he'll give it life and that body will become an eternal resurrection body. That's the good news. "Even this mortal body," he says, "will be renewed."

The reason I've been talking about the Holy Spirit is because I think living in the Spirit is the absolute key to the Christian life. I told you Romans 1:16 is what I think is the front door key to Romans—to get you in. Now turn to Romans 14 for a minute, verse 17, and this is what I believe to be the back door key that locks it in. Romans 14:17. If you were to ask me what the front door key of Romans I'd say Romans 1:16, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel." But the back door key to the whole book of Romans is in Romans 14:17 where it says, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking." (Not a matter of 'do's' and 'don'ts') Here's what it is, "but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Verse 18 says, "because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by man." Remember what it says in Romans 8, where it says,

“Those people who have their minds set on sin cannot please God but those who are enjoying the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit are the ones who are please God.”

CONCLUSION

Most of you know I'm a big football fan. One of my favorite coaches I've heard about through the years is a coach by the name of Lou Little who is now retired. He was coach for many years for Columbia University and at Georgetown University. He had a player who was a 'walk on'—undersized—and he and the coach got along great. The coach had such affection for this young man he let him play several plays on defense, although he wasn't a starter and would never earn a scholarship. The coach would often see this player walking around campus with his arm linked with his father's arm and he admired the boy because of the good relationship he had with his father. One day, coach Little's phone rang and he was told this player's father had just died suddenly of a heart attack. He had the unpleasant job of telling that player his father was dead. So he told the player and said, “Son, take all the time you need. Go home. Don't worry about coming back this Saturday for the game. You need to be with your family.” But to the coaches surprise the next Saturday there was that player, dressed out, as Georgetown was getting ready to play Fordham University. The player said to Coach Little, he said, “Coach, I know this is a strange request but would you let me start today?” Coach said, “Son, I know you've been through a tragedy—your father died, and I know you have a lot of heart, but this is an important game. I can't play you but a couple of plays. But just because of where you are in your life, yes—I'll start you today.” So that player went in the game as linebacker. This undersized walk on became a player that covered the whole field and made bone-crunching tackles and was the key to the defense. Coach Little never took him out of the game! He played an unbelievable game, a game like Coach Little had never seen before, and Georgetown won—largely because of the play of that one, undersized walk on football player. After the game, Coach Little went to that player and said, “Son, I can't believe it! I mean—what was different about you today? I've never understood that you could play half that good!” The player said, “Coach, not many people knew but my father was blind, and for all of my football career here he had never seen me play one game, but today for the first time he saw me play and I just wanted to please him.” That made the difference. The truth is, we have a heavenly father and the reason we want to live a holy life is not so people will look at us and say, “Good for you.” The reason we want to live a holy life, full of the Spirit, is to please our Father in Heaven.

OUTLINE

I. MINDSET ON SIN-DEADLY LIFESTYLE (5-8)

"Those" People:

1. Can't please God: Frustration without faith

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. *Hebrews 11:6*

2. Don't know God: Profession without possession

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." *Matthew 7:21*

3. Don't submit to God: Living without life

"But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives." *1 Timothy 5:6*

II. MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT-LIFESTYLE OF PEACE (9-11)

"You" (Believers):

1. Indwelt by the Spirit

"...the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you . . . On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." *John 14:17*

2, Filled (controlled) with the Spirit

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. *Ephesians 5:18*

A believer is always indwelt by the Spirit—But not always filled with the Spirit.
WHY NOT?

a. Ignorance

b. Unbelief

c. Unconfessed sin

3. Renewed by the Spirit

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. *2 Corinthians 4:16*

a. Daily life!

b. Future life!

ARE YOU:

God-focused?

Christ-centered?

Spirit-controlled?