

ROMANS Part 65

Chapter 8:11-17



God's Spirit Makes Its Home in Us

by Martin Zender

Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you. 12 Consequently, then, brethren, debtors are we, not to the flesh, to be living in accord with flesh, 13 for if you are living in accord with flesh, you are about to be dying. Yet if, in spirit,

you are putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living. 14 For whoever are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" 16 The spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God.

17 Yet if children, enjoyers also of an allotment, enjoyers, indeed, of an allotment from God, yet joint enjoyers of Christ's allotment, if so be that we are suffering together, that we should be glorified together also.

In the last installment of the Romans Series I told you that, in spite of how much flesh you possess, God considers you to be "in spirit." It's that "ounce of divine presence" that defines you, to Him. The spirit inside you is the same spirit that made its home in God's Son, Jesus Christ. That you grasp the truth of the evangel of grace—the truth of Christ's all-sufficiency—proves that the spirit of God makes its home in you and that you will therefore, eventually, produce the fruit of this indwelling power. Don't waste too much time sitting under the tree looking up, however. Watched pots don't boil, and scrutinized fruit trees seem to hold faint blossoms forever. Just go your way and let the spirit do its thing. Then one day you can look up and say, "An apple!" In the meantime, I don't want you measuring your possession of God's spirit by what you see—or don't see. Fruit takes time, and the rate of growth is God's department, not yours. Judge rather by your recognition and realization of the truth, for this occurs instantly in a spirit-zapped individual.

The first light to dawn on you at the entrance of spirit will be the realization of how "just like everyone else" you are, and that were it not for God's pre-designation of you, you would be just like all the people you so recently condemned. This is saving faith.

In this section of Romans chapter 8, Paul's focus is two-fold: 1) resurrection, and 2) sonship. If you don't feel better about your situation after this exposition, it won't be my fault. For years I thought that there was only one Son of God. The truth is that there is only one *firstborn* Son of God, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus Christ is destined to raise up many brethren, and thus God is destined to enjoy many Sons. Listen to Paul in Galatians 3:24-27—

So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ.

What makes us the sons of God? Faith—specifically, “the coming of faith” (Galatians 3:23). It happens on a particular day (Colossians 1:6). Faith is not developed within. It comes from without (Romans 12:3), from God. On the day this happens, we become liberated from any sort of law we've labored under, whether it be the law of Moses, the law of a church, the law of a parent, or any other self-imposed ordinance. So meaty is this coming of faith that it transforms us from self-possessed prigs into sons of God. We become sons of God “through faith in Christ Jesus, for whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

This baptism, remember, is not the modern Christian ceremony that requires a soaking. This is the baptism into Christ's death (Romans 6:3). Christ's death occurred 2,000 years ago; that's how old your baptism is. God identified you there because you were “chosen in Him before the disruption of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). Baptism is identification with Christ in His death, entombment and resurrection (Romans 6:4). Immersion into a river or a fishtank only insults the profundity of true baptism. Have you ever seen people plugging their noses when a baptizer dunks them backward into a river or a fishtank? This is not the baptism into Christ's death. It's more like water-boarding.

SONS OF GOD

“Son of God” is perhaps the most eminent title given to humans, from above. The possible exception would be the title, “Member of the Body of Christ.” The phrase “son of God” has become so commonplace that it has lost its punch for us. As sons of God, we become as Christ. Christ is God's firstborn Son, but many other sons ensue,

chosen ahead of time for this near-dear position.

When Jesus Christ walked on Earth, He had literal brothers who did not believe in Him, “For not even His brothers believed in Him” (John 7:5). Jesus' literal family frustrated Him. Sound familiar? The one thing that many of us want more than anything is to be loved and accepted by our nearest kin. When we learn of the glories of God, we want to share these with blood relation. Yet these are likely to be the ones rejecting us the hardest. This hurts. Jesus Christ, our “elder Brother,” experienced such pain without let-up. Here is Matthew 12:46-49—

At His still speaking to the throngs, lo! His mother and brothers stood outside seeking to speak to Him. Now someone of His disciples said, “Lo! Thy mother and Thy brothers stand outside. They are seeking to speak to Thee.” Yet He, answering, said to the one saying it to Him, “Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand over His disciples, He said, “Lo! My mother and My brothers!”



“I think Mary hoped that the doofuses of her womb would believe in Him.”

Jesus and His mother fellowshiped well, but we've already learned from John 7:5 that His brothers basically thought He was crazy. In the above passage, why do you suppose His mother and His brothers sought Him? I have my Zender theory. Trouble was brewing, if you ask me. I think that His literal mother had brought His literal brothers to this particular location on this particular day to hear His inspired speech. I think Mary hoped that the doofuses of her womb would finally believe in Him. Had Jesus disengaged and gone to them, I imagine the following conversation:

Jesus: I appreciate you stopping by, but can you see that I'm in the middle of inspired oratory?

Mary: We have been listening to you, son. Tell Alan and Tex here what you told me yesterday.

Tex: Yes, tell us how you were “inspired by God” to give this “timeless” speech today.

Jesus: Why the tone, Tex?

Mary: Tex, you said you would be gentle. You have just heard Him speak.

Alan: Mother, any of us could have spoken like this.

Mary: Then why have *you* never spoken like this?

Alan: Are you saying that Jesus is better than me?

Mary: Raise your viewpoint, Alan Who else but God's Son could say these things?

Tex: Please, Mother. Not with the “fulfillment of Scripture” thing again.

Mary: Get your mind out of the mud, Tex.

Jesus: (somewhat exasperated) Thank you all for stopping by. May I return to my Father's work?

Alan: Your *father's* work? Daddy's at home sanding doors. Just who are you talking about?

Mary: Jesus, talk to them. *Please.*

Jesus: Mother, I've talked to them nearly every day for two years. What more do you want of me?

Tex: Tell us again about the “Son of God” stuff, Jesus.

Alan: And tell us about how you're the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecies. That's my favorite.

Jesus (to His mother): Why have you done this *again* to me?

Mary: (sighing) I thought it would be different this time.

Jesus: With all due respect, you're off by two eons.

Tex: Oh no, it looks like some people are leaving, Jesus.

Alan: You better dream up more inspired words, Son of God, before they *all* walk away.

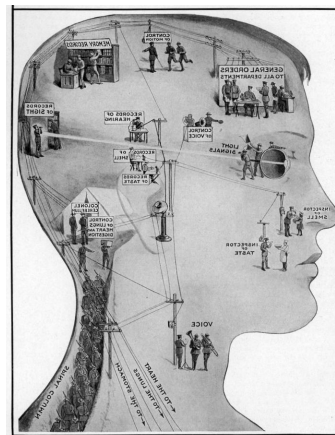
DEEPER THAN BLOOD

Jesus knew the spiders lurking in peoples' hearts, especially in the hearts of His own family. Our Lord beat His head against enough walls at the temple to continue the beating at home. So instead of honoring this particular disciple's tacit request for a family pow-wow ("Lo! Thy mother and Thy brothers stand outside. They are seeking to speak to Thee"), Jesus refuses what He knew would be yet another dead-end debate. Rather, He stretches His hand over the entirety of His most intimate followers and says, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers? Lo! My mother and My brothers!"

His “mother” and “brothers” were those who heard His Word and followed Him. We of this day hear His word

and follow Him as He presented Himself from heaven to the apostle Paul. Thus, we too are deeper than blood relation to Him. We are part of His spiritual family.

Sonhood is an intimate relationship. God is sovereign over all and has given Christ all power over those in heaven and on earth, but only a very few today enjoy membership into the family of God. Our relation to Him is so near that it is called, “the body of Christ.” Sonship and body-membership complement one another. The former term contrasts our historic condition as aliens (Ephesians 2:19), with the present privilege. The latter term (“body of Christ”), describes the depth of favor. Ours is not as a child on a Father’s knee listening to a bedtime story, but of a unity of mind and purpose. Here, the Savior Himself asserts His thoughts and actions, through us. We are united with Him by a com-



mon head: *His* head. It will help to think of your literal head. Think of your various body members responding to the single impulses of your mind. The command to “run” involves every member: heart, lungs, legs, adrenals—everything. Such is the depth of our communion with Christ, our Head. This is sonship

on steroids. Not even Israel dreamed of such accord between humans and the Creator of heaven and earth, for they are called, “The bride of the Lambkin” (Revelation 21:9)—a cozy but far less convivial term.

We enjoy a hint of this now, for Paul says, “We have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

CONTRAST FOR CHRIST

It is Jesus Christ's joy to call us His Father's sons. He also loves pointing to us from heaven and saying, "See those people? Those are members of My body." It makes up for His earthly frustrations. He is happier about this than we are. His earthly experience demoralized Him, but we give Him something He can't now have among His angelic worshipers: fellowship with like-sufferers. (Angels cannot taste death.) His disciples are now dead, but we're not. Paul is now dead; we're not. He can't fellowship with Paul now, or with Peter, but He can re-live

the old days with us. Besides God, we're all that He's got right now in that department. The celestials don't get it because they've never taken flesh or been scared shitless of death. They know nothing of mortality or underarm deodorant. He can't really talk to them because they're of another generation. He can rule them, but He can't share any tales of suffering with them; lack of experience precludes their empathy. Not us. Strange, isn't it? We're always wondering if God and Christ realize how bad we've got it, when what we should be thinking is that Jesus Christ craves our insight into what *He* went through. We presently occupy the same planet He suffered upon. It's the same chunk of real estate with pretty much the same nutjobs on it.

JESUS LOVES IT WHEN WE'RE CONSCIOUS

From His present vantage point, I believe that Jesus Christ can almost look back upon His earthly sojourn with rose-colored glasses. I'm not saying He misses it, but neither am I saying that He doesn't. I think He'd enjoy descending today to reminisce about the old days with us. He'd be helped as much as we. The Man has feelings, doesn't He? While on Earth, He rose early to talk to His Father. We do the same thing (some of us stay up late), but we speak to *Him*. His Father's voice



“He currently enjoys, not the dead but the living.”

rarely manifested itself, but His presence slathered Him. Same with us now. Jesus does not walk or talk among us, but He's standing right next to us; perhaps literally. He can't manifest Himself quite yet; the timing is wrong. Wait until the timing is right—that's coming. Jesus strains to keep things on the faith-level, but boy would He enjoy coming down for dinner and a cocktail. He's saving the visible stuff for later. In the meantime, spiritual fellowship occurs uninterrupted.

He currently enjoys, not the dead, but the living. The truth about death—that the dead are not alive—ought to help us realize how much He needs and wants us. You wake up in the morning to seek Him, but He seeks you first. He is glad when you wake up, because now He has fellowship from an Earthling. This satisfies His heart because He was here too. It ought to satisfy our hearts even more to know that the hour of our daily rousing resumes His wonderment of us. We know a little bit about what He went through—more than the boring immortals now attending Him. He wishes you would get up earlier. But if you go to bed late, He enjoys that too. Again, He can have no two-way fellowship with either the dead or the unconscious. He fawns over us while we sleep. (I assume He does not need sleep.) It's different and delicious for Him when we wake up because now it's a two-way deal.

Wake up to it.

GUARANTEED FOR LIFE

Sonship is a great gift for the now, but does it guarantee us future dividends? How does immortality sound to you?—

“Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you” (Romans 8:11).

In one of my “Crack O’ Dawn Report” videos from three years ago (#48, “If It Moves, It’s Saved”), I told you that, “If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual body also” (1 Corinthians 15:44). The very existence of a soulish body—that is, a conscious body moving on its own—guarantees a corresponding spiritual body. The very fact that your dog is a living soul proves that one day this pooch will possess a spiritual body. This guarantee of a future body has nothing to do with how good or how naughty your dog is. (For many dogs, this is a fortunate fact.) Does the soul have a mortal body? Then it will one day assume a body that can't die.

In the above verse, we're considering similar truth. If the spirit of Him Who roused Jesus from among the dead makes its home in you, then He Who roused Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you. I've got to hand it to Paul here. It sounds like another one of his awkward sentences, but his madness admits to a method.

Why doesn't Paul just say, "If the spirit of *God* makes its home in you ..." Because now we're looking at the spiritual truth of resurrection. Paul wants to point out that the One Whose spirit makes its home in you is the same One Who roused Jesus Christ from among the dead. It's like Paul is giving us the old "nudge-nudge, wink-wink" treatment. You and I have the same goods that roused Christ, namely God's spirit. *Get it?* The fact that God roused Christ and that the same spirit that roused Christ makes its home in *you*, is a humongous clue that you will be raised to immortality, just like Christ. God's spirit runs a "Make-It-Immortal" business, and you're up to your neck in it. Paul follows his "nudge-nudge" with the plainer words, "He will also be vivifying your mortal bodies." Then Paul bookends it with a repeat of the reason why this wonderful thing happens (in case you forgot): "Because of His spirit making its home in you."

INSPIRED STRUCTURE

There is a remarkable structure here that I spotted myself; these things are all over Scripture if you know how to look for them. The writers were not even aware they were doing this, I don't think. Structure is an earmark of inspiration. It's a phenomenon:

1. The spirit of Him
 2. Who rouses Jesus from the dead
 3. Makes its home in you
1. He Who rouses Christ Jesus
 2. Will be vivifying your mortal bodies
 3. Because of His spirit making its home in you

This is called a Simple Alternation, where a subject is repeated from a different angle. Here, #1 corresponds with #1, and so forth. In the first #1, the subject is God. In the second #1, the subject is still God, but the difference is that the first #1 presents God about to rouse Christ from the dead, while the second #1 presents this same God about to rouse *us*. It thrills me to know that I possess the same spirit—the same exact spirit—that roused Christ Jesus from the dead. I'm therefore looking for the same thing to happen to me as happened to Him. Talk about "having the goods." I'm presently lacking quantity, but not quality of spirit. All I need now is the necessary measure of spirit that will overwhelm death (in my case, mortality), just as it did for Christ. Because we are members of the body of Christ, this can happen at any time.

The #2's really excite me: The rousing of Jesus Christ from the dead is an historical fact: Jesus Christ alone has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). The corresponding #2 makes *our* vivification from the dead only a matter of time. One day it will be just as historical as *His* change. It already happened for Him, and we have the same spirit He had, so wait for it. It's guaranteed because the same spirit that roused Him lives in us, and this is what the spirit *does*. The purpose of this phenomenon of structure is to show us divine correspondences that we miss in the surface view. As far as the #3s go, the first #3 relays our enviable situation stated as a fact: we have the spirit of God in us. The second #3 tells us that this situation, which *is* a fact, is the reason why our mortal bodies will be vivified.

This structure oozes with guarantees of immortality.

* * *

I've got more to say on this passage, but I'm on the road visiting the saints and I'm up against the clock. I'll leave this same passage tacked up next week and will tell you then how an appreciation of the above truth will bend us, in our everyday lives, toward a contemplation of the spirit of God inside us—as little of that as there is—and not toward the flesh. It is true that we have more flesh than spirit now, but this doesn't bother God and it shouldn't bother us. The trick is to think about the spirit and not about the flesh. When you do that, some remarkable things will happen. I guarantee it. —MZ
(*To be continued.*)

C O M I N G T O

Los Angeles

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

On Saturday, November 7, I will be in the Los Angeles suburb of Glendale, CA, for an informal gathering at the home of Sandy Scott. If you are anywhere in the vicinity (that is, anywhere in the 48 contiguous states), then come on out. This will be an intimate living-room gathering with plenty of time for discussion and Q & A.

For information about time and location, you can email Sandy Scott at: earthgirl777@gmail.com. Or call her at: (310) 734-9874.

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