

Life in the Spirit

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 July 2024

Preacher: Stephen Murray

[0 : 00] So I'm going to ask you to turn your Bibles not to the book of Acts, but to go one book over to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 8 and verses 1 to 17. Romans 8 verse 1 to 17.

And I suppose this is the sign of the change in technology is that when you say turn your Bibles, you don't hear any like real fluttering of paper. It's a distinct memory I have in the church that I grew up in was that everybody brought their Bible to church.

I'm not trying to shame you all, although maybe if you feel a little bit of shame, it's okay. Bring a Bible to church. But the church I grew up in, whenever the minister said turn your Bibles, everyone was like paging.

And it was a beautiful sound, I think, as we get into God's Word. But I know you've got your apps, and so you're probably still looking at it on your phone. That's fine too. But Romans chapter 8, verse 1 to 17.

The Apostle Paul writes, and he says this. He says, And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

[1 : 40] Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set in what the flesh desires, but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set in what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh, but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

And if 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 because of His Spirit who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it is not to the flesh to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if you, by the Spirit, you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

[2 : 52] For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again. Rather, the Spirit you receive brought about your adoption to sonship.

And by Him we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now, if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings, in order that we might also share in His glory.

This is the Word of the Lord. Let's ask for God's help as we study together. Our gracious God, our heavenly Savior, I want you to meet with us in your Word this morning.

I want you to feed us with food from heaven, food that we can only get from your Word, food that nourishes us in our souls, as it shows us your glory and your beauty, and it transforms us to make us like your Son.

We know that we need your Spirit in this work, Lord. This is not a classroom. We just gain knowledge, but this is a place where we are changed as your Spirit works your Word into our hearts, into the very deepest recesses of our hearts.

[4 : 05] And so we ask that you would do that very thing this morning. Have that mercy upon us, we pray. For Christ's sake. Amen. So we are actually continuing our series in the book of Acts, but we're not in Acts, we're in Romans.

The nice thing about going really, really slowly through a book is that we can stop and we can double-click on things as we need to before kind of moving on with the narrative and the story. And you'll know, because we've looked at the last two weeks at the book of, well, the events of Pentecost, the pouring out of God's Spirit, we've looked at the kind of signs and the features that accompany that pouring out of the Spirit.

Now, straight after that, you would have seen, if you read a little bit ahead, the Apostle Peter is going to get up and he's going to give this really profound sermon, what you might call the kind of first New Covenant Christian sermon in the era of the Spirit.

And we'll spend some time in that sermon over the coming weeks. But before we get there, I think based on some of the stuff we talked about the last two weeks, I wanted us to spend a little bit more time thinking about the work of the Spirit to clear up a couple of things.

Last two weeks, we touched on ideas in sort of really broad categories, that God's Spirit brings life, that God's Spirit brings His presence, that He purifies, that He gifts us.

[5 : 27] We saw that last week, that He draws us together and He reverses the human fracturing that is caused by sin. We saw that in the reversal of Babel, that happens at Pentecost.

But we haven't really dug down, I think, into what that means on a day-to-day basis for you. What does the Spirit of God do for you, the believer, in ordinary life, every single day?

And so moving away from Acts 2 for a moment, we find a really good description of the Spirit's work here in Paul's writing, in Romans chapter 8, in these verses, 1 to 17. And I want us to walk through this and just kind of color in some of the details about the Spirit that were left uncolored in in the last two sermons in Pentecost.

Now, a little bit of background to this passage. Throughout chapter 5 to 8 of the book of Romans, Paul is, what he's trying to do essentially, he's trying to build people's confidence in Jesus Christ.

He's trying to say, I want you to have confidence in Christ. And he shows his readers in the earlier chapters of how the gospel fundamentally has changed us and brought us from under the condemnation of the law into grace.

[6 : 41] In many ways, the first four verses of what we read are a summary of all the stuff that's gone on before. So look down chapter 8, verse 1. He says, therefore, this is the summary, therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Actually, in the previous chapter, in chapter 7, just directly preceding this, he introduces his readers to two kind of competing ideas pertaining to our personal experience of sin and obedience.

As you're trying to be a Christian and understand sin and obedience, he introduces these two categories. He talks about the flesh, and he talks about the Spirit. Now, the flesh, if you go back there, you'll see the flesh is really what we might call the sinful nature.

In fact, some translations, I think, use that sinful nature. It's a part of you that in Christian theology, we would say, is inclined towards doing and thinking and desiring things contrary to God's will, contrary to God's law.

[8 : 07] And it's because us humans have this sinful nature, this flesh, and I'm not going to defend that. I think that's kind of there in Christian doctrine. You can come ask me questions about that afterwards. But because we have this sinful nature, this flesh, the law of God is so problematic to us.

The fact that God holds up a moral standard to us is so really problematic when you're inclined to kind of run the other way all the time. Because our inclinations are away from the law. And so therefore, the law is going to repeatedly stand there condemning us.

And so we need the grace of Jesus Christ to come and to remove that shadow of condemnation. So that's what the flesh is. But then what about the spirit?

What about this other category? What role does the spirit play? And here's, that's where Paul goes, chapter 8. He looks at how the spirit then comes along and makes us confident in Christ, even though we feel like we stand condemned under the law.

So I've hinted towards this in the previous two sermons. But I know that the work of the Holy Spirit is something that sometimes confuses people a lot.

[9 : 12] We're not quite sure what to make of him. I think if I had to ask you, like of the three members of the Trinity, which one are you like the least kind of sure about what they do?

Like Jesus we know, God the Father we know, but the spirit, like he's a little bit of enigma. The Old King James Version calls him the Holy Ghost. And I think for many people, that's what they have in their mind when they think of the spirit.

He's like some sort of wispy, mystical creature. He haunts us, but in a good way. It's like Casper the Friendly Ghost, like a little bit freaky, but a good freaky. And so we're gonna clarify, try clarify that this morning.

Think about the spirit. And I think chapter 8 gives us some insight into his important work. We're not gonna say everything. There's still more we could say, but we're gonna try to say a bit here. So two real simple points, although there are a couple of sub points in here, but I'll make it sound like I got two points.

The spirit gives us life. And number two, the spirit makes us children of God. The spirit gives us life, and the spirit makes us children of God. Here's the first one. Verse 10, Paul tells us that the spirit gives us life.

[10 : 16] And you say, well, that sounds lovely, but what exactly does that mean? In Acts 2, you remember, we talked about this. So we said that rushing wind, that whole wind breath analogy stuff that we get from the spirit, that symbolizes the life-giving work of the spirit.

That's so really important to us because we live in this world of death, this culture of death that we feel all the time. And so it's really great to know that God is pouring a life-giving spirit into this world. But that was kind of like a satellite view of the subject from miles up in the sky, looking down.

What does it look like when you get down at the concrete level in the day-to-day? Let me make three observations from mainly verses 5 to 13 here.

Three observations. Number one, you have no spiritual life if you don't have the spirit. You have no spiritual life if you don't have the spirit. So Paul makes a pretty straightforward claim here at the end of verse 9.

He says, if anybody does not have the spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. That is to say, you can't be a Christian without the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 25] And this is, you'll see in that text, this is amplified in the way that Paul contrasts between living according to the spirit and living according to the flesh, the sinful nature. So verse 5, he says, those who live according to the flesh have their mind set in what the flesh desires, but those who live according to the spirit, in accordance with the spirit, have their mind set in what the spirit desires.

The mind governed by the flesh is death, a strong language, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God, he says. So the person without the spirit is defined as, or described as desiring things that are not of God, as being hostile towards God, as being incapable of submitting to God's law, and really of pleasing God, he says there.

That is the language of kind of like complete relational alienation, like complete relational breakdown. If you and your friend have, like a long-term friend, you have a really serious argument and you don't reconcile, you end up in a situation where you're alienated from each other.

So you stop sending each other texts and you stop hanging out or planning to hang out with each other. There's a latent hostility that exists under the surface there between you.

[12 : 38] Neither of you want to submit your wills to each other to try and find any sort of reconciliation. Now sometimes that alienation is not completely total because sometimes you're both part of like a bigger social circle or group of friends and so you get invited to parties or social gatherings that you're both there, but then it's like all really awkward.

Everyone knows what's going on. You walk past each other at distances. You're polite and cordial, but that's about as far as it gets. The hostility is obvious for everyone to see. Sometimes that's what happens.

There's alienation, but it's not total. But then sometimes there's alienation that's completely total where you move to a different city to get away from this person, to have any sort of association with this person.

The fracturing is so deep. The hostility is so complete. There is no possibility of peace. Relationship is dead. Without the Spirit of God, you are alienated from God in that second way.

Paul is not describing a slightly broken relationship here. He's saying, friends, look, this relationship is non-existent.

[13 : 46] In other words, if you don't have the Spirit, you are not a Christian. You're not alive. You're dead. There's no peace, and there is an irreconcilable hostility between you and God.

This is pretty serious stuff. To be without the Spirit is to be alienated from God. Now, I think straight away, the big question that comes to most people's heads when they hear the pastor say something like this or they read Paul say that is, do I have the Spirit?

Am I a Christian? How do I know if I have the Spirit? How do I? Because this is pretty serious. Am I alienated from God? And to answer that question, we're going to have to dig down more into this passage and what it's saying, and we'll get to it in a second, but I just want to say two quick things by way of application.

Number one, you can sit here in angst about your spiritual status before God and go, do I have the Spirit? Am I really a Christian?

But you need to know that becoming a Christian is actually a really simple thing in the Bible. So before you try and get all super complicated about like, am I really a Christian? How do I really, really know I'm a Christian?

[14 : 57] Just be clear that becoming a Christian is a simple thing in the Bible. In the Bible, it is repenting of your sin, saying, actually, I don't want to live this way anymore. I don't like my sin. I don't want it. I want to not live this way anymore.

And then trusting in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior to save you from that sin. That's not rocket science. And so, feelings of angst and passages like this that are nervy, you can sit there and you can overthink things.

And I want to say, don't overthink things. If you're saying, am I a Christian or not? First of all, go back there. Repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ. That's what it means to be a Christian.

Now, we'll come back to the marks of the Spirit that can be identified in your life to some extent and you can look back and we'll add extra levels of assurance. But don't overcomplicate stuff at the beginning. Repent of your sin and trust in Jesus Christ.

Second little application thing I want to say here is we've skirted, we kind of skirted around the edge of this issue last week when we talked about tongues. But there are some forms of Christianity that appear to teach that being a Christian and getting the Spirit are two distinct experiences.

[16 : 05] So you'll find this in classical Pentecostalism and you will find it in some charismatic churches, though not all charismatic churches, I want to be very clear that there are actually some charismatic churches that would be very opposed to this particular doctrine.

But you'll find it in Pentecostalism and some charismatic churches. There's this idea that you come to faith by believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ like I just explained, but then at some point later on you have a distinct second experience of the Spirit often called baptism in the Spirit and that's when you really get the Spirit and this kind of sense of the Spirit's empowering work in your life.

It's not that you weren't a Christian before, it's just now like you're a super child, you're a Jerusalem bunny Christian now. Now these groups would kind of look at Pentecost, chapter 2 of Acts, and they would say, well you know what, the disciples were Christians before the Spirit came, before He was poured out.

They already believed the gospel, but they needed the second experience of the empowering work of the Spirit. There's this two-stage work of God there and that's how it should always be for Christians.

Friends, I want to say that I think that it is a really, really, really big mistake. A really big mistake and I want to also say that I think it has almost no biblical warrant and I say almost no because obviously you can get it from a superficial reading of Acts 2, but I really think it has no biblical warrant.

[17 : 31] Paul is clear here in Romans 8 that having the Spirit and being a Christian are one single unified experience.

There is no lag between them. If you have the Spirit, you are a Christian. If you don't have the Spirit, you are not a Christian.

The Bible is clear on that. In fact, if you go to 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, and I was shown this actually by a charismatic who pointed this out to you who didn't believe in this gospel, this doctrine, he said, no, this is actually problematic doctrine, a charismatic friend pointed this out to me and said, you go to 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13, where Paul actually uses the language of being baptized in the Spirit, the context of that verse where he's using the term being baptized in the Spirit is clearly talking about conversion, coming into the body of Christ is the way he talks about it there.

Not some sort of delayed experience that comes after conversion. And so I think that teaching that the baptism in the Spirit is some sort of second distinct experience that happens after your conversion is a very, very unhelpful teaching.

It has no basis in the biblical text and I also think it causes a lot of Christians to then really wonder if they have the Spirit of God or if they've got like a short-changed version, like they've just got the deposit but they didn't get the whole thing.

[18 : 56] Paul says no. He says if you have the Spirit, you're a Christian. Flip that around. If you're a Christian, you have the Spirit.

You don't need some sort of extra distinct second experience. But then let's talk about experience. What experience is there actually of the Spirit in the day-to-day?

So here's the second observation from this text. The Spirit aligns our inclinations and our affections with God. The Spirit aligns our inclinations and affections with God.

So those same verses there, verse 5 to 8, the main feature of the person who has the Spirit is that their mind is now fixated on things of God and mind there, we might think of mind purely in terms of rational stuff but I think here the ancients have much bigger categories of things like mind.

So they're thinking intellect and affections here at this point. So the best way I can explain what the presence of the Spirit is like in the life of an ordinary believer is to say that the person with the Spirit has their inclinations and their affections decidedly turned towards the things of God.

[20 : 09] That does not mean that you never have wants or desires gravitating towards your sinful kind of fleshly part in life but it does mean that in terms of your overall orientation you are now bent towards God in a way that you were not before you were a Christian.

Okay? And that is a supernatural occurrence. Something has happened. A switch has been flipped. How has it happened?

What has happened? When you became a Christian God the Holy Spirit came to live in you now. He didn't live in you before, now He lives in you. He exerted external influence on you in some ways before but now He lives in you.

I think a lot of people think about the Holy Spirit with a kind of Jedi mentality. That is you conceive of the Spirit rather as a force than a person. So for a lot of people being indwelt by the Spirit is not that much different of may the force be with you.

The Holy Spirit is not that. He's not a force. He's a person. You'll notice later in verse 16 Paul says the Spirit Himself testifies.

[21 : 21] Now a little Greek language exercise here. In Greek language you have genders assigned to nouns so you can have a masculine noun a feminine noun a neuter noun.

Spirit the word for spirit is always in the neuter but when Paul gets the chance to put a pronoun in front of that he always puts masculine pronouns. He says he, him. In other parts of the Bible you'll notice that you can lie to the Spirit.

You can grieve the Spirit. You can't lie or grieve to an impersonal force. You can only lie or grieve a person. So the Holy Spirit is a person he's not a force.

God lives in you in the person of the Holy Spirit if you're a believer and through that experience now your inclinations and your affections start to bend. They start to bend towards God's will rather than to your own fleshly will.

And so then if you are wondering if you're a Christian or not and saying well do I have the Spirit well one thing you can do is look over your life. Look over your Christian life. Has that happened to some extent?

[22 : 28] Do I find that my inclinations and my affections are heading towards God more than before I professed faith? Is that growing? Is there a shift there? Is there growth over a period of time?

Now again I want to be clear Paul is not saying that your head and your heart will perfectly be aligned with God's agenda all of the time. This is not perfectionism but there should be change. There should be growth there.

There should be movement there on those things. It's worth noting this is not an automatic mechanical process. You can actually work against the Spirit in your life.

You can suppress those Spirit given inclinations towards the things of God. So if you look at verse 12 he says therefore brothers and sisters we have an obligation but it's not to the flesh to live according to it for if you live according to the flesh you will die but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live.

So Paul says we have an obligation to live according to the Spirit in the way of the Spirit. You have an obligation to put to death the misdeeds of the body that is the sinful stuff that comes from living according to the flesh.

[23 : 38] Now Paul would never have to say that if this was just a mechanical process like hey I've got the Spirit of God so I just have to sit in this pew and by osmosis my inclinations and affections are just going to keep changing and I'm just going to get better and better at being Christian.

He wouldn't have to say well put to death the misdeeds of the body if that was the case. So yes God by His Spirit is going to begin to change and move those inclinations and affections but you've got to live them out and not suppress them not push them down with fleshly wants and desires.

There's a level of competition there. There's a level of struggle. You would have seen that actually in the previous chapter in Romans chapter 7 if you read that. There's a fighting to kill the flesh in line with these Spirit given inclinations.

Let me give you a kind of a visual illustration of this. This is a very rudimentary illustration and I'm sure if you're a really smart theologian you could probably find some big holes in this and come and tell me afterwards where the big holes so don't quote me on this or don't tweet me on this or anything like that.

But a kind of rudimentary visual illustration of this is to think about paddling on a canoe down a river and the river is flowing slowly but steadily in one direction.

[24 : 48] At the end of the river is this beautiful beautiful lagoon surrounded by mountains and beautiful beautiful calm water and you're paddling down this river towards that lagoon.

That's where you want to go. That's your destination. I want to be in the lagoon. But on the way well there's a couple of things there's a couple of problems there's distractions on the bank that you might want to stop and look at. There are intriguing sites there there are forks in the river parts of the river that branch off to unknown destinations not really sure where they go.

There are little eddies that swirl around circulate the water in the wrong direction. There are parts where it's really shallow you can run aground. If you don't keep paddling in the steady flow of the current you can end up off route and away from what you truly want which is to get to that beautiful lagoon at the end.

Now the influence of the person of the Holy Spirit in your life is in some ways like that current. Slow and steady and it's flowing towards that lagoon.

That lagoon of God's love and his purposes in this world. You can resist that flow. You can paddle backwards.

[26 : 08] You can stray into an eddy or down a wrong fork in the river. By coming to make his home in you the Spirit of God has provided you with that slow steady flow.

Sometimes we're being real jerks and not getting this right and God gives us the kind of rain that we had in the last couple of weeks and just moves you down that river a little bit more because stuff is not working. But to the extent that you go with that flow you will experience life in Christ.

That's what Paul's on about here. And to the extent that you resist that flow you will experience grief and the fallout of sin and death in your life.

And so my simple question is are you paddling with the Spirit in your life right now? Or are you idle at the oars? Or even worse than that paddling the wrong way through unrepented unconfessed sin?

Because of God's glorious gospel work in our lives we have an obligation Paul says to paddle downstream in the steady flow of the Spirit consciously putting to death the misdeeds of the body that is straining to eradicate sin in our lives as we find it in actions in thoughts even in desires.

[27 : 24] Stay in the flow paddle hard you'll have life you'll have peace he says that's what it means to live in the Spirit third quick observation here before we move to the second point and that is that the Spirit brings present and future life so look at verse 9 he says you however are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit that's good news for you Christians if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ they do not belong to Christ but if Christ is in you then even though your body is subject to death because of sin the Spirit gives life because of righteousness and if 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 because of his Spirit who lives in you so Paul there interestingly says this is not just about truly living now in his present life it's about living on into eternity in a resurrected body the Spirit who will help you to live

God's way in the present life is the same Spirit who he says was at work when Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and it's the same Spirit who will then see that you are raised from the dead into a body that will never perish or decay so this is in one sense kind of in the way that we would often use the word spiritual in general parlance but this is not just spiritual life we're speaking about here it's this concrete future life too future resurrected life in a body in other words the Spirit's work is not Paul's kind of mystical way of speaking about how to be a better person in this material world it has real hard substance that you can touch substance that will be most clearly seen most clearly felt when you are raised from the dead to live in a new resurrected body no longer subject to decay now this actually distinguishes Christianity over from many other religions many other forms of spirituality because many other forms of spirituality both ancient and current would look at the problem of the flesh many of us agree we've got a problem with the flesh but they'll look at the problem of the flesh they'll look at our misdirected desires that we don't want they'll look at all the problems that these desires cause the actions and the thoughts that spring from them and the problems that come in our lives is that and so they'll say well here's what you do you drive a wedge between the spirit and the flesh saying don't worry about the flesh that nasty stuff that's causing all your problems just immerse yourself in the spiritual through meditation or whatever and then even kind of superficially look at the bible and say well look that's what

Paul's talking about drive a wedge between the two in other words get yourself out of this decaying body with all its broken desires and everything and get yourself into the spiritual realm it's a disembodied spirituality that you find in like a lot of new age religion or eastern religions but Christianity is not that Christianity says no no no no your body matters your body matters yes right now it is corrupted by flesh but God is going to fix that the Holy Spirit is not just going to renew you spiritually in a decaying body one day he's going to recreate your body as well without decay I see all the older people going Christians future is not a disembodied future it's a physical tangible life lived in peace and harmony with God so with those three quick observations I think we can see how the Spirit brings life and in that way increases our confidence in Jesus

Christ but there's one other way that Paul mentions here and that is and this is our second point the Spirit makes us children of God look at verse 14 for those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God the Spirit you receive does not make you slaves so that you live in fear again rather the Spirit you receive brought about your adoption to sonship and by him we cry Abba Father the Spirit himself testifies with our Spirit that we are God's children now sorry now if we are children then we are heirs heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory another thing the Spirit does for you if you're a believer is he makes you children of God through adoption by the Spirit living in you you are adopted into God's family as children God goes from being your judge to being your father the word

Abba there is not a Swedish pop group it refers to Aramaic word for the father Aramaic being the language that Jesus would have spoken the disciples would have spoken Jesus called God Abba by the Spirit we get to call God Abba it's a term of significant intimacy you see up until this point in the book of Romans Paul has been speaking a lot about salvation in what we might call forensic legal terms he's been using the language of the law court up until this point he's described salvation as God the law giver sending his son Jesus Christ the law keeper to pay your debt you the law breaker and he does that how by taking the penalty in your place he dies it's all kind of courtroom language up until this point and so in some ways it can kind of come across as a little bit cold and clinical but Paul wants you to see that grace is anything but cold and clinical there isn't just a legal transaction that's taken place here there's a warm intimate relational transaction that's taken place you've been brought into

[33 : 35] God's family you now get to call him Abba we might not always have had the best earthly fathers so sometimes that can cloud out the force and the emotion of the image that Paul is using here but I think we instinctively know even if we had a really negative experience of an earthly father I think we know that the relationship between a father and a child is supposed to be one of really special loving intimacy when I watch movies nowadays one of the things that really really gets at my emotions and I cry a lot in movies but the thing that really gets at my emotions in movies nowadays is depictions of fathers being separated from their children through things like divorce or illness or some disaster really really kind of gets at me one person who's really actually big on this is the director Christopher Nolan so Christopher Nolan's got all these famous movies like Dark Night and Oppenheimer the recent one and that but lots of those movies have this image over and over again so you look at something like

Inception or Interstellar and you think like wow these are like mind bending sci-fis I'm like no it's about a dad and his kid I'm like this is so like people are shooting guns and fighting I'm like how is he going to get back to his kid and I know this probably has to do with my special relationship I have my own kids so to see depictions of that getting broken up that really kind of affects you and I think that level of emotion is and reaction is due to the fact that I've come to see this particular relationship as so special so precious so intimate so now what I do is I transfer transfer that to God and I see that that is now how God sees me he has willingly chosen to have that special intimate relationship with me he wants my heart to be wed with his he wants to take a deep vested loving interest in me and my well-being that's true for you this morning if you're a

Christian spirit lives in you you're God's child his precious child and he has incredible love for you and if you are a child well then you're also an heir Paul says heirs with God and co-heirs with Christ you've entered into this wonderful new family situation you're like an orphan child who has been taken out of grinding poverty and placed securely into a loving family with all the resources all the support to make you flourish in your future how did you get all of this how did we get all of this it's a clue verse 17 Paul says we're co-heirs with Jesus if indeed we share in his sufferings we got into his family we became heirs by being united with our brother in his sufferings we got into this family because our sibling out of unbelievable love entered into immense suffering to bring us in

I'm a sibling I am the father of two siblings when I think of siblings the first word that comes to my mind is rivalry fighting for ascendancy but in Jesus we have a sibling who fights but not against us for us he fights to the point of shedding his own blood so that we can enjoy the privileges of children in the family of God Christ our brother in perfect agreement and being sent by our loving heavenly father gave his life on the cross that we might be brought into the family that's the gospel and what the holy spirit does is he comes and he beams that reality into our hearts and he reminds us that we are God's children that's what you find the spirit doing throughout the new testament he's always beaming about Jesus he's always shining the spotlight onto

Jesus he's always trying to show us how glorious how wonderful the person and the work of Jesus is because he knows that if we're going to do all this stuff like put to death the misdeeds of the body the thing that we need more than anything else is we need to have our vision of Jesus enlarged and made bigger and bigger and bigger to have it illuminated so that our hearts melt then in love for the father who sent his son for us many of you know my father died when I was 11 years old in a helicopter accident I have very warm recollections of my father the little bits I can remember when he was 10 years old at the time he was in another helicopter accident you might say well why was your dad always in helicopter accidents because he was an engineer but he was in another helicopter accident in the sea off the KZN coast just outside of Durban south coast now I have pretty sketchy details and try to ask questions and I've seen some newspaper clippings about this about what exactly happened but I do know that he was in some ways involved in rescuing people so it was a big helicopter crashed and he was helping people get out and get into lifeboats and be rescued

[39 : 26] I always kind of like in my mind I think of you have you seen that movie The Guardian with Kevin Costner old movie where they would like jump from airplanes into the sea to save you I'm like that's my dad now it fills me with a great sense of pride and admiration to think about that to think about my dad and I'd love to know more I'd love to know more about his heroism I'd love to know more have more light shed onto the rescue what exactly happened I'd love to see all that and then I kind of have swell a little bit more in warmth and admiration for my brave father we have another father we have a father who has fought for us a father who has taken on the very forces of hell and death for us a father who has endured immeasurable cost for us a father who sent his beloved son for us we have a father who loves us in words and deeds that are too powerful for us to comprehend we get to call that father

Abba father and we more than anything need the spirit of God to reveal more and more of that father to us to fill our hearts with the vision of that loving father and the sacrificial work of his son our brother you're never going to be able to do this work of putting to death the misdeeds of the body you're never going to be done with that flesh you're never going to fight that flesh and all the chaos that it brings into your life until you see that glorious vision of the father and it is the spirit of God in you that is making that vision bigger and brighter every single day let's pray together our gracious lord and our savior we we come to you this morning and what we ask is that your spirit would give us a bigger vision of you and your love and your son's costly work for us because we're going to leave this building just now and we're going to go out into life we're going to go to work tomorrow we're going to go into difficult work environments we're going to go into difficult family environments we're going to go into difficult friendship situations and we're going to do all of that carrying our own fleshliness our own weaknesses and struggles our own sinful desires and we so much want to be free from them we so much want to not be enslaved by them so we ask for your spirit to do his work to give us a vision of your love that is so powerful so all encompassing that we will put to death the misdeeds of the body we will resist the flesh and we will walk in the spirit give us that strength give us that power this morning we pray

Lord and I want to pray for anyone who might be sitting here this morning who doesn't have your spirit because they have never repented of sin and trusted in Jesus I pray that your spirit would awaken them this morning and that they would repent and trust in you may we be a spirit filled church Lord we pray and we ask this for Christ's sake and his glory Amen He would bring me