



Peace...In Christ

Romans 8:5-11 |

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SUMMARY

"For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

Verses 7 and 8 round out Paul's opening argument about God's provision of his Spirit for weak Christians like you and me. And, if that was where the letter ended, we would all head out into our days with our heads hanging down. Because all of us experience the daily struggle of doing the wrong thing instead of the right thing that we know we should do, and some days do desire to do, yet don't always desire to do, and sometimes don't desire to do for the right reasons! (see Romans 7).

Paul calls it a law that is at work within us (the law of sin and death) but, and here's where Romans 8 becomes so exciting, there is another law at work within "those who **are** according to the Spirit." The law of the Spirit of life who **sets us free** from the law of sin and death **AND brings** life that is truly life and peace that is truly peace (Romans 8:2, 6; John 10:10). And that's just what Paul points us back to in verse 9.

"You, however..."

Whatever follows that "however" changes everything. And so, we wait with bated breath like a hospital patient awaiting the doctor's full diagnosis, or a contestant on the Great British Bake Off awaiting Mary Berry's verdict on the composition of his pie's crust ("Absolutely scrummy!" or "Soggy bottom"?).

"...are not in the flesh but in the Spirit..."

Elation! And the joyful undoing of all that was dreaded by those who still possess a strong suspicion that God does not fully accept them despite their faith in Christ, despite the promise of no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, despite all of the stories and scripture that reveal the merciful character of God.

Despite all of those things we still wonder if our faith is "good enough," if the promise is secure enough, and if the stories are true. And in this surprising, stranger than fiction passage we hear affirmed again and again the beautiful gospel-reality that "if Christ is in you, although your body is as good as dead because of the reality of sin, the Spirit is life because of Christ's righteousness."

"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."

Again everything Paul is giving to us as good news hinges on the Spirit of God having made you alive and giving you union with Christ Jesus. If that Spirit who so powerfully raised Jesus from the dead, if He dwells in you then you're golden! Signed, sealed, delivered. You're his and will be raised again to life through his Spirit in the new creation! Now that's something you can build a life on!

Take some time as a group to read Romans 8:5-11. Then ask these questions:

1. What stood out to you as you read today?
2. What point does James seem to be making?
3. How does this portion of Scripture connect to what came before? How does it connect to what comes after?
4. What didn't make sense? What do you still wonder about?
5. We walk through most of our lives waiting to find out about some thing or another: a job, test results, whether our affections are returned.

Here in Romans 8:5-11 we hear that we don't have to wait to find out about how God thinks about us. He tells us right here: "if Christ is in you..." then everything has changed. The "day of no more condemnation" has arrived! **And that brings REAL, life-transforming peace!**

Take some time today to thank God for this, and to ask him to help you live into this wonderful gospel-reality!