

There is both stated and implied that the work of the Holy Spirit is to make up the difference between what is real in God's view and how you've got to live in this present world. Now, you are justified, correct? Say amen, please. Say amen. You are dead to sin. Sin is dead to you. You're dead to the law. The law is dead to you. You are righteous. Completely righteous. And this is not something you reckon. I mean, you can reckon if you want to consider, but this is reality, and yet, tomorrow morning, I will have a fight with my wife after having preached this glorious message tonight. You, in turn, are going to do something really bad. And yet, you know that it is not you, but sin that dwells in you. But all the verses in the Bible are not going to help you one bit. You're going to know you did it. And you're not going to feel like "the devil made me do it." And you're not going to be able to say, "It was no longer I but sin that dwells in my flesh."

You're going to know that the Holy Spirit has awakened and raised from the dead your spirit, and it's perfect. Your soul has been saved and redeemed. The flesh has been locked out, and it is sin, and sin has been dealt with. And in the sight of God, sin is dead in relationship to you, and you are dead in relationship to sin. But you're going to do something, and you're going to read that verse, and it's not going to mean a thing in this world to you. It's not going to mean anything to you. And you're going to say, "Boy, oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, oh boy. That stuff Gene brought sure did taste good while I was listening to it."

Well, praise the Lord. There is, in another realm, all that is real. And in this realm, a lot that's not real. Nonetheless, you've got to live with what's not real. And I see in this passage the ministry of the Holy Spirit making up the difference. And what you're not able to remember, what you're not able to reckon, and what sometimes you just plain, simple, flat do not deal with.

You're not married, Ollie. You don't know how fast you can get angry with your wife. Does anybody else have this problem? You're just as happily married as you can be until some little thing happens. Just like that, you find yourself yelling at your wife. You don't do that, do you? But you, what? Okay, fine. Same thing, or whatever it is. Mine just look bigger. I paint mine in reds and yellows. Your wife does the same thing. She's just the sweetest little gal you've met in your life, and she's living in the Spirit. She loves the Lord. And then, boy, that's alright. It's what comes after that hurts so bad. It's the backlash of living with yourself.

And in Christ, there is no condemnation. The Lord does not condemn you. I mean, no matter what happens, Jesus Christ is not going to condemn you. And I wish you could really believe that. But you're standing there, and sometimes you're having a really difficult time handling your own view of yourself. Well, thank you, Robert. Amen. It's really true. I have this problem; maybe you do not. If you do not, you're probably not married. And I realize that most of the singles do, but I can tell you it gets a lot worse. It's a lot worse. It's just a lot worse. And this passage deals with telling us what the Holy Spirit has done concerning our flesh.

Now, what did we learn last night, or the other night, that the Spirit had done in dealing with the deeds of our flesh? Can you help us all just a little bit? A little louder, please. You're in the Spirit, you're not in the flesh, because the Spirit dwells in you. And because Christ is in you, your body has died, and the Spirit has given you His righteousness. Alright. The Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead has now done something else. What has He done? What? Alright. Let me just put it this way.

Up until right now, Paul has relegated everything to the body and even pushed it out of the body into the flesh. The whole matter of concern is way over there. And he finally says to you all of these glorious, wonderful promises, all of these things that you are now, everything that is going on in your life, that you will mortify the deeds of your body; because the Holy Spirit is in you, you're going to do this. And then he says, and don't forget: if the Father can raise Jesus Christ from the dead and give Him a spiritual body, then that same God and that same Spirit can also do the same with your body.

Now, let me just tell you something here, saints. I have never been a pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die Christian. You know the old saying: pie in the sky when you die by and by? Or pie in the sky by and by when you die? I have never been a Christian who has said, "Oh, it's rough down here. I can't wait till we get to heaven. Oh, I sinned today, but oh, one day we're going to get to heaven." It sounds so... icky. It's a cop-out. That's right. It's a cop-out. But I want to tell you something: there's truth in it. There's truth in it. There is a sense when nothing else will comfort you, when you're sitting there having yelled at somebody, you have lost your temper, you have done something that has just really laid you out flat, to remember that all of this has been relegated to one small area, and even that has been dealt with in the eyes of God, that is as dealt with as the resurrection. As the resurrection.

But when nothing else will help you, remember that you have a spirit raised from the dead that is perfect. You have a soul that is redeemed and is being made into the image of Jesus Christ. If God raised Him from the dead—Him whose body became sin, His flesh became sin, and your flesh was in it—and God condemned His flesh, which had become sin, and your flesh in it, because your flesh, having sin in it, was in Him and it was condemned, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled—that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled.

If that God who took this terrible body of Jesus Christ—may I put it that way? Because His mortal body had become sin. All sin of all time, of all space, of all space-time, and all dimension, in all creation - and yet raised Him up a spiritual creature who was both visible, yet who could eat fish on the shores of Galilee, who could walk through a wall and come into a room and yet hold His hand out and say to Thomas, "There it is. Put your hand in it - the wound." A totally spiritual body. If He can do that to Jesus Christ, the same God will have no problem whatsoever in one day swapping off the only problem you've got left. Now say, "Praise the Lord" to that. And you and I need to have this attitude. We are exhorted to have this attitude—that this is a better attitude than going around thinking about how terrible you are, because a Christian ought not to do that. Tom? Yeah. Good. Oliver, a Christian,

ought not to do that. You are not going to be growing in the Lord a whole lot with that kind of sight of yourself, because it's not God's sight.

I'm going to stop there by saying: The Lord has given you His Spirit. The same Spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead will put an end to the last problem you are aware of in space and time, on this earth. Would you try to develop that sense just a little bit? I don't want us to be cop-out Christians. But it is good to know where the last vestige of our problem lies.

Alright, now we're going to go on. He now presses His consolation and comfort for you. And I'm going through this verse forever, so join me in verse 13. He passes now from the flesh into a new subject: once again, the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Verse 12:

*"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."* And he never did say, "But we are under obligation to the Spirit to walk according to the Spirit." And I'm glad he didn't say that. Because that word *obligation* would probably put one of you under the pile, he stopped. And now he changes the subject.

*"For if you are living according to the flesh, you are about to die. But if you are living according to or by the Spirit, you are putting away the deeds of the body, and you will live."*

Now, then, brothers and sisters, if the Holy Spirit is in you, therefore you are in the Holy Spirit, and you will put away the deeds of the flesh. I'd like to go back to the other night. The deeds of the flesh are often listed in Scripture, and they are never pastel things like depression, low self-esteem, discouragement, or anxiety. They are "murder." You're not anxiety in your flesh. You murder with your flesh. Lying. Stealing. Cheating. Big old ugly things. Drunkenness. Addiction. These are things of the flesh that even the unbeliever can put away and put out of his life. And if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you will put these things away. Isn't that simple? You will do it as a believer who is in Christ, and Christ in you, and the Spirit is in you, and you are in the Spirit. What do you mean, Gene? "In the Spirit?" Well, you weren't here the other night. I am in the Spirit. If the Spirit is in me, I live in the eyes of God. I live in another realm.

Alright, now verse 14: *"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God."*

Now then, how many of you believe the Bible is the Word of God? How many of you believe you ought to believe everything that's in the Bible? Oh, good, I know you do. Then is this passage for you? For all who are being led by the Spirit of God—these are the sons of God. The word "sons of God" should not be taken lightly as metaphorical. You've got to believe, first of all, that there is a race, a genetic race of gods. Head for the door. What is this guy doing? Well, I didn't say that. That's what Jesus Christ said, and He was quoting an Old Testament passage that His Father had said.

I have often told a little story about after the Lord comes and the world is made new, and there's a new earth and a new heaven. A spaceship comes down from some other part of the

galaxy, and a little green child with little antennas looks out the window. And he sees this beautiful planet, and he says to his daddy, he says, "Daddy, what is that planet?" And the daddy says, "That's where the gods live. That's where God the Father lives. And that's where Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lives." And He has called me brother, Amen? And the Father has called me son. Is this true? Do I call Him Father? He calls me son. I call Him Father. Jesus calls me brother. I'm about to find out what the Holy Spirit's doing here in just a minute, but I am metaphorically a son of God? No. I am not. Now, I am not a *begotten* son of God. I am an *adopted* son of God, but I have got some kind of adoption that will go beyond any other. Any of y'all orphans? Any of y'all? Have you been adopted? We've got one here, that's all, but usually it's three or four.

Man, listen, this is adoption that puts past everything. This is the adoption of not only you as a body, but you are given something that ordinary adoption cannot; you are given the life of your adopted Father, the actual - that is correct, you are given through His Son—the actual genetic lineage of divinity. You become partakers of divine life. Now that's wonderful, is it not? But what good is it if you don't know it? What good is it if you only know it intellectually? And this is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now listen to me, because actually, in everything we're talking about tonight, we're really discussing this gap between how you feel and how you look at yourself, and how God sees you. And here's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And we have been so encouraged concerning our flesh. Now we're being encouraged concerning our sonship.

Okay, I'm a son of God. What does that mean? Is that a metaphor? I am saved; therefore, God treats me like a son? No. God sees you, and sees me, today as more His genetic child than He sees you as the child of your earthly father. In His eyes, you are far more in the lineage of one who has partaken of divinity than one who has partaken of humanity. Now, that's how He sees you. That's how the Son sees you. That's how the Spirit sees you. That's how the angels see you. They are revered by you, but you, being caught in time and space, and having had a history of sin and so forth, and so forth, and so forth, and in the weakness of your flesh, to be told that you are a son of God is virtually worthless. It is worthless. It is of no good to you. Intellectually, you will never get it. You will never hold on to it. But—

If you will study your Bible, and pray, and tithe, and witness, and go to a building and be good and be very, very good, you will still not feel like you're a son of God. You will feel that you're under the view of performance and that if you stop performing, you're going to lose whatever status, I'm not talking about your salvation, whatever good standing you have with God. But if you are led by the Holy Spirit, you have a witness—not your own—that you are a child of God. A witness from another realm, a witness from a higher source, that you are a child of God. The Holy Spirit is as picky as He can be about who He leads. He does not lead the sons of darkness or the sons of men. I don't doubt that the Holy Spirit speaks to everyone at some time or other. That's not what I'm talking about. This is not what Paul is talking about, excuse me - we are speaking concerning being led.

Now, you all know how to be led as Christians. You were taught in Bible school. It goes like this: and all unbelievers will be cast into the pit forever and forever. What is that, someone told me the other day, that we have three witnesses—one is the something, and one is something else, and one is the Bible, and I don't know what it was, but it was just so terribly intellectual. But Paul does not qualify the statement. He's not afraid of it. He is not afraid of an internal relationship here. He is actually pushing it to an extreme in order to help our weakness.

He says, "You, if you are a child of God, are led by the Holy Spirit." Not circumstances. Not scripture. But by Him who lives inside of you. And I have only one thing to say about this whole point, and that is: dear saint, dear child of God, allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. He lives inside of you. Allow Him to increase His witness of your sonship because He's picky about who He leads. And when He leads you, you will be encouraged to remember and realize that you have something glorious indwelling you; some awesome thing is going on inside of you. And it is a witness that you are a son of God. So, brother, be led.

"Oh, but Gene, we will definitely fall into a pit because of our emotions or our perverted intellectualism or something else." Oh, go take that somewhere. Dear child of the Lord, this book was not written to an individual. It was written to a body of believers in the biggest city in the world. And if you come in here one day having hammered a thumbtack into the top of your head because you believe the Holy Spirit led you, we will turn you over to the psychiatric ward. If you come in here with a bone through your nose because you believe the Holy Spirit has led you, we will send you to the psychiatric ward. If you come in here having lost 150 pounds, and you only weighed 200, and it's because the Holy Spirit has led you, we will start stuffing food down your stomach, into your stomach.

Brothers and sisters, you have the sanity of the body of Christ around you. The only way on earth that I know of that you could really mess yourself up is if you got to feeling you were led some way in the body of Christ and kept it an absolute secret and just let it be something that tormented you. If it is known, there will usually be, if you are among a sane group of people, some sort of witness, or counter-witness, or balance, or something. I don't even like to get off on those things. I just want to tell you something: if you are halfway psychologically normal, of course, that in itself is rare, is it not? You can trust the leading of the Lord in your life. And let the Lord lead you, because, dear child of the Lord, it will encourage you to know you are a child of the Lord.

Now, I'm going to just invert that. If you're led by the Spirit, it is a witness that you're a child of God. If you are a son of God, you will be led by the Holy Spirit. The two are the same thing. They cannot be separated. If there is one, there is the other. If you're led, you're a son. If you're a son, you're led. He lives in you. And this is the ministry of the... Isn't this an odd thing that Paul would put here? To say this will encourage you in your weakness. I have built a citadel, a cathedral of glory, of what you are, yet I recognize that you still will have weakness in taking the glorious place that you are in Christ, but you do remember what the

Holy Spirit is doing and will do concerning your flesh. And also, every time He leads you, remember: He only leads a son of God. Amen. Praise the Lord.

*"For you did not receive a spirit that enslaved you, leading you once more to fear. But you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which you cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God."*

You've got the leadership of His Spirit witnessing to you, and you also have your own spirit witnessing to His Spirit. You have two witnesses that you are a son of God, regardless of how picky or pitiful you may find yourself one day feeling about yourself. Now, I am assuming that you have as many problems being a Christian as I do. Now, if you don't, this is all meaningless to you. I am assuming that you are as weak as I am. Is that a possibility? I am assuming that you get discouraged sometimes about who you are and what you are. Do you ever have this problem? Yeah? You do?

Alright, then you have the leadership of the Holy Spirit, which says you're a son of God. You are a son of God. Therefore, you are led by His Holy Spirit. Wonderful. You also have a spirit within you, your own spirit, which is always in another realm, even though that spirit is in this realm. That spirit stands in two places: in you in this realm, and in Him in that realm. And your spirit, your resurrected, enlivened, raised-from-the-dead spirit, is saying to you, *You're a child of God*. And the Spirit of God speaks to your spirit and says, *You're a child of God*. And your spirit speaks back to the Holy Spirit and says, *I'm a child of God*. And then His Spirit says to your spirit, *You're a child of God*. And your spirit calls back, *I'm a child of God*. And there's a witness. I would like to encourage you to do something. And that is, allow His Spirit in you to tell you you're a child of God.

Now, I'm a child of a guy named Blackie Edwards. We never did know where he got that name. That was the darkest Frenchman that ever lived. The most outstanding feature of my dad was that he left me alone. I can't say my dad ever condemned me; as far as I know, he left me with no inferiority complexes. That was left to other people to do. But if he took me up on his knee and said, *You're my boy. I know you're my child. You're my son*, I would feel, in that moment, loved. Encouraged. I'd feel like my daddy was trying to communicate something to me. Put his arm around me and say, *"You're my son. I'm your daddy."*

That's an intimate thing. Now, if my Father, and His Spirit, and His Son's Spirit say to me, *You're a child of God*, and His Spirit says to me, *I'm your Father*, then somewhere in the background I ought to be able to hear the strings of a hymn that says: *It is well, it is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul*.

If I'm being witnessed to by the Trinity, if the Spirit is walking around in me, encouraging me and reminding me and leading me, all toward reminding me of who I am, then no matter what my circumstances are or how I feel, I ought to be able to step back and say, *It's okay*.

I'm going to just say a personal word here. I deal with spiritual things like the priests of the Old Testament deal with the altar. That's hard. I don't know if I'm given to more

discouragement or depression than other people or less. I know that with rare exception, there's a bottom to how depressed I can get. It just gets down there and stops. It won't go through the floor. Thank God. Nonetheless, something happens to me that probably doesn't happen to most of you. Have you ever blown it really badly on the way to a meeting? Have you, Camille? Just really bad? Aren't you glad you didn't have to get up and speak that night about the riches of Christ? Aren't you really, truly glad?

We have some brothers in here who claim that they have been called to the Lord to preach. The nearest one to me here is Eric. Now, Eric is given to being discouraged. But oh, Eric, you don't know what discouragement is until 6:45 one night and you pull a big one. I don't know what it's going to be, brother. There are 10,000 possibilities. 10,000 categories, but some possibility. And you walk into a meeting, and you've got to speak. And it's your turn to speak on the riches of Christ. And I'll tell you exactly what you're going to do. You're going to stagger up to the front and say: "I can't do it tonight, folks. It's just—I just can't. I just can't."

I feel that there's no one in this room weaker than I am as a Christian. I don't think there's anybody in this room who blows it more than I do, and I doubt that there are many of you who can get down any lower than I can when I blow it." And it seems as though a large part of my blowing it is done right before a meeting. But I have never once come in and said, "*Let's just—can't do it tonight, saints.*" Now, I don't know why I've never done that. You don't know how many hundreds of times I've been tempted to. You don't know how many times I've gotten up to go do that very thing right in front of y'all, but I can tell you this: to His honor, to His glory, and to His praise, He lives in me. And He's still calling me a Son of the Living God.

*It is well, it is well, with my soul, and my spirit.*

Now then, just one other passage here, and that is verse fifteen, which gives us one of the very few insights into first-century Christian praying:

*"For you have not received the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by which you cry out, 'Abba, Father.' "*

Now, one of us, one of you scholars, would you tell us what *Abba* means in Hebrew? You know somewhere. *Daddy. Papa.* I think this is a very important verse of Scripture because it has to do with first-century praying. Now, if you only had the book of Romans, and all you ever knew about first-century praying, most of it would be right around that verse right there. That you pray: *Daddy.* I doubt there is anybody in this room who has the nerve to call God your Father, *Daddy.*

In Tyler, Texas, some years ago, when I was just leaving the organized church and was getting into this other little world, we had a group of Christians who were meeting. And I'm going to tell you that the testimony the sister gave. She had just been converted; she had little or no religious background, and when we read this passage one night together, she could not believe it. She said a few days before, she had been so anxious, and she had gone

to the Lord, and she had just been saying to Him, *Abba, Abba, Abba*, and she did not know what it meant. And she found out - it was the endearing term for a Father with whom you love, who loves you, whom you trust, and with whom you have very close fellowship.

*Abba, Father.*

Look, y'all. Here's not a call to pray for the salvation of the world. This is not saying to intercede and pray all night. This is not confessing your sins. This is not nine ways to approach God. Seven things to say when you begin. Four things to ask Him. Eleven things to never ask Him. All of that garbage. This is love between a child and his daddy. This is intimacy. This is an interflowing, an intercourse of love.

This is one of the few places in the Word of God where you get a good, clear idea of what a first-century Christian experienced in prayer. And it is as intimate, as close - I don't know, I'm going to say it again - intimate. Private. Personal history of intimacy. It's not a bluff. It's two people who know one another really well. And one who really senses the devotion of the other. And the Spirit is in you, just encouraging you:

I lead you; therefore, you're a child of God. You are a child of God; therefore, I lead you. Your spirit witnesses that you're a child of God. Witnesses to Me -I witness to your spirit that you're a child of God. And the Spirit begins to encourage you to reach out to your Father and treat Him like a loving Daddy, who isn't angry, who isn't put out with you, who seems to understand the mess you're in and the mess that you are.

I'm a grandfather. I don't feel like a grandfather. I raised my two daughters too harshly, too strictly, too legally. This year, I have my grandson with me. I'm not doing a perfect job, but one thing - he's a boy. And I'm a boy. And I understand him better than I understand girls. I never even knew what was going on in my family when we had two; I really didn't understand. And I tried too hard. But this little kid, oh man, this kid's got problems. I mean, he has *really* got problems. You know, he takes his clothes off and leaves them right where he takes them off. You know where he is at any time of the day or night; you can follow his clothes.

I wish to God I had been as good a father as I am a granddad. I don't care. I don't care. I'm so proud of that kid. I'm not going to throw him out in the street. I'm not going to throw him out in the street if he lies to me, if he cheats, or if he steals. I'm not going to throw him out in the streets, no matter what he does. The fact of the matter is, he is such a good kid that it bothers me - he's mine. If I can, I, a heathen Gentile, can do that, what can love do? Do you understand what I mean? What can love do? I'm speaking of a divine being.

Verse 16: You're going to do better in relating to your own father, huh? I couldn't do better. You had some problems somewhere in your life. You never had a daddy. I had five. You had five of them. This kind of distorts things, doesn't it?

We need a father image. Because sometimes we don't get one. *Blessed is he who, having not seen, believes.*

Give up whatever model is in your mind of what God is and take the real one. Praise the Lord. We all have an image, probably based on our dad, or maybe our mother, our brother, or our sister.

One of these days, saints, we're going to get down talking about praying. I hope that you will give up everything you do in your prayer life. And you don't really need to get much further than *Daddy*.

Go out and pull a big one. And just feel like you cannot stand—live—another minute. And find some place to lean back and just say: *Daddy, Daddy, Daddy*. Because the Spirit of God is telling you to do that. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is in you—constantly seeking to, and now that you know it, is showing you what a place you have in God, in Christ, and in the Spirit.

*Father. Abba. Father.*

I'm not going to get any further away from you than such an intimate relationship. There are no circumstances. There are no misdeeds that're going to take me further than that from You. Spirit, lead. Lead my sister. Lead my brother.

And when You lead, we'll cry out:

*I'm a daughter of God.*

*I'm a son of God.*

Lead, Spirit. Spirit, keep on telling me to call Him *Daddy*. Keep on putting this Father in front of me. I have not been given a spirit of fear. I have been given a Spirit that says:

*Daddy. Amen.*

Oh God. We are forty or fifty in this room, and we all have the same Spirit. Lord, we all have different needs, but work in us such intimacy. We're forgetful. Spirit of God, remind us. In the worst moments, remind us. Spirit within us, cry:

*Abba, Abba, Abba.*

Oh God, we mean to be people of the Spirit. Of an indwelling Lord. Awaken our hearts. Awaken us, Lord, to the divine realm in which we live. Lord, You are very precious. And you have been very encouraging. Amen.

*(Singing)*

*Father, we adore You.*