

# Worship 12\_05\_2021

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:03

It's time for us to get a little more deeply into God's Word together. So as I invite you to do every week, I hope that you will have a copy of scripture out and open in front of you. If you have a personal Bible or Bible app that you'd like to use, I hope you'll have that out. If you need something, there are red Bibles in front of you in any of the pews right there. And we will be once again in the New Testament this morning in a letter that's called Romans. So after the gospels in the book of Acts, you'll find that in Romans and be in chapter eight, and I hope that you have that out. One, just reminder here again, if you did not get one of those individual communion element servings on your way in and you need one of those, if you could just raise your hand, one of our elders can bring that over to you at this point. So if anybody missed those on the way in, we'd be happy to get that to you.

00:46

Very good.

00:48

We'll be again in Romans here this morning in chapter eight. So got that out.

00:54

When I was in third, in fourth grade, I participated in this art program that was just down the street over the Carnegie Museum of Art, and we would go each Saturday and spend some time learning different things. And we would be shown different techniques like oil painting, or sculpting or drawing or etching and the assignments that we would typically have then after we learned a particular technique was to go in and in the museum somewhere, find a piece of art that was created using that sort of stuff, and then do our best to try to imitate that to try to replicate that for a bunch of third and fourth graders. And, you know, we find that we try to do our own oil painting version of a Van Gogh, or sculpt some miniature Rodin or sketch something that hopefully looked like something Rembrandt did. And for again, some third and fourth graders, what we did sometimes was fairly decent, but no one was going to ever mistake what we did for the original masterpiece, and we didn't expect them to all that we could do is they would look at and say, Alright, I think I see what you're kind of trying to do there. That's That's cute. Yeah. I bring that up because I have had a very similar feeling over the past

week as I've been reading and rereading Romans chapter eight and trying to write some sermons. On that chapter. I'm not going to recreate a masterpiece. I know that my only hope is that you could hear him and say, Alright, I think I see what you're trying to do right there.

02:08

Romans eight if you're not familiar with it, we're gonna spend time in if you're not familiar with Romans eight is one of the just the incredible portions anywhere in Scripture. It's just so significant, so empowered, so empowering, so impactful. There's so much that is going on there. The things that reveals to us that this is on really like the short list of just significant sections of Scripture. All scripture is God's word, right, of course. But there are some really powerful parts you think of maybe, like Genesis one or Exodus 20, or Psalm 119, Isaiah 53, John 17, First Corinthians 15, this particular passage, maybe Hebrew, Ephesians, two, Hebrews 10, some of these ones, you say, this is just there's some really incredible stuff here. We're gonna spend the next three weeks in it. And even though that may seem like a lot amount of time that we're not even going to come close, really to getting into the full depth of this. So we're going to start. But before we do that, let's pray.

03:03

Great and gracious God, we thank you for the time that we have to be here together today.

03:08

Lord quiet are distracted minds,

03:12

calm or distraught hearts.

03:15

Let us hear what it is that you have to say to us. And then let us respond in ways that demonstrate our love for you, and our love for others. And Father, I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts would be acceptable in Your sight for we pray this, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

03:34

We've been studying this letter that Paul wrote to the Roman Christians throughout this fall. And if you've been with us, I've said this each week, but it's important, we're looking at a little section each week, a little slice. But they weren't written that way. This is an extended train of thought that Paul is writing to the Christians who are in the ancient city of Rome. And it was a pretty diverse group of believers, quite a number of them that come from ethnically and culturally and religiously Jewish backgrounds. Quite a number from ethnically and culturally and religiously Gentile backgrounds and

the questions that they had, where do we all relate to God the same way? How does this work? What about the times, we disagree on things and Paul writes, right at the beginning, it says, I've got good news for you, because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes Jew, Gentile, everyone. Now, you all need that good news. He says, because every single person is accountable to God, and every single person has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And there's not a single person that can earn that righteousness through their behavior. It's not about what you perform. It's about what God has promised. It's a free gift. He says it's received by faith. It comes to us by grace, it's received by faith and he knows that there are some misunderstandings that come up about this. So then he addresses some of the misunderstandings that people have of the Gospel before getting into what we looked at last week when he says and there's you know, there's a struggle even after you come to know this good news even after you know, Jesus, there is this struggle because everyone

05:00

have us can say, I know the things that I'm supposed to do, man, I'm not doing those. And I know the things I'm not supposed to do. And I keep doing those, again, who could possibly deliver me from this and he says, Only Jesus. So all of that really builds up to what we see in Romans chapter eight here again, and when we first started to study and illustration, and I use for you is that the book of Romans is kind of like a solar flare. The sun is capable of illuminating the entire solar system on its own, but it's also got these even more brilliant bursts from time to time. And Romans is like that in Scripture. And if that's the case, then Romans eight is kind of like the blinding center of that solar flare. So we're going to begin in in the first 11 verses, and I want you to humble your hearts and open your ears because this is the word of the Lord, as Romans eight beginning in verse one.

05:49

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of Life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin, and death. For God has done what the law we can by the flesh could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walked not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For it to set the mind on the flesh is death. But the set the mind on the spirits, is life, and peace. 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.

06:45

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

06:49

You, however, not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead, because of sin, the Spirit is life because of 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.

07:22

Only four times in the first seven chapters of this letter has Paul mentioned the holy spirit or the spirit. And then he does here 11 times in 11 verses, it's clearly bringing up something significant, something that he has touched on before, but he's really diving into right now. So the first thing I want to do here this morning is, make sure we understand that reference. When Paul is talking about the spirit, so much make sure we understand that reference. And then there are three things that he talks about the spirit of life doing in the lives of those who belong to Jesus. So I'll look at those with you here. And then just wrap it up by offering again, some thoughts on how all this relates to Advent, and how understanding this might forever change the way you experience Advent.

08:09

Paul talks a lot about the spirit here, it's just evident if you were listening, or you're reading along, you saw it, as I mentioned, 11 times and 11 verses here. Well, well, who, or what exactly is Paul talking about here?

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In this section, he does not use the term the Holy Spirit that's that's not using this section, that he only uses that term five times in the entire letter, it's very obvious that that is the reference he's talking about the Holy Spirit.

08:32

This passage in particular is a very, very significant one in Scripture for helping us to understand the doctrine of the Trinity. And the Trinity really is just the absolute bedrock when it comes to Christian belief in terms of our theology, or anything that we believe it always grounded on one God, eternally existed in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there's distinction, but there's not division.

08:57

And Paul doesn't set it out here in very systematic form. But what I hope you notice, what I'd like to point out to you is just how seamlessly he moves through the beauty of this, in the way that he's talking about the spirit. He just moves seamlessly back and forth, and displaying the beauty of this understanding of one God, eternally existed in three persons his Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here's what I mean. Here's our refers to at one point, he refers to the Spirit of God, showing that there is a divinity there, the spirit is divine, the spirit is gone. Another point is talks about this spirit, showing that it has a distinct point of identity to specific point of identity. Then after that, he talks about the Spirit of Christ, saying that the Spirit of God is one with the Son of God. And then immediately after that, he refers to him as the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead, that is one with God the

Father. So again, it's not very explicitly mapped out point by point, but there's this rich Trinitarian theology here when he's talking about the spirit of life. This is God's own Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Father, one with the son, one with the Father. This is the spirit that

10:00

rings life. This this is a massive topic. Look, I understand that. I'm just going to confine ourselves to a couple things that I think Paul brings up here a couple specific points he brings up in terms of what is the Spirit do? What's the Spirit do in the life of a believer, what's the Spirit do in your life, if you're a believer,

10:18

just the points that he brings up here. The first one is this Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus. And He is the one who has taken away our condemnation.

10:27

Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus, he's the one who's taken away. Our condemnation was back in chapter six at Paul first started to use this language and talk about this imagery of us being united to Jesus Christ of union with Jesus. And here he's he's using that same energy you see him speak about us being in Christ. And he also says Christ in you. He's talking about this intimate relationship, this intimate union that's there. That happens by grace, through faith, the Holy Spirit, so thoroughly unites us to Jesus, that whatever is true of him, becomes true of us. Whatever he has accomplished, gets credited to our account.

11:07

Holy Spirit unites us so thoroughly to Jesus, whatever he has accomplished gets credited to us, whatever is true of him, becomes true of us. And that is what leads up to this triumphant declaration of the beginning, they really the entire letter has been building up to this point, really, everything in Chapters one through seven is building up to the beginning of Chapter Eight here when he says, Therefore,

11:26

there is now no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus is a very powerful statement, it comes across even a little more directly and perhaps powerfully in the original language because he doesn't use a verb there. He just says, Therefore, no condemnation. For those who are in Christ Jesus, he's building up to this triumphant announcement right there, he says, no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. It's actually a pretty rare word that he uses. But that's translated their condemnation, it's only used two other times in the entire New Testament word that he uses there for condemnation don't use two other times in the entire New Testament. Both of them are in chapter five of Romans.

Just gonna point them out to you. This is back in Romans chapter five, verses 16 and 18. This is where he's talking about our relationship to Adam, the one who brought sin and death into this world compared to our relationship with Jesus who brings life and righteousness, and he says this.

12:18

And the free gift is not like the result of that one man, Adam, that one man's sin for the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation.

12:27

But the free gift following many trespasses, brought justification. And then down in verse 18, therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification, and life for all men.

12:42

I point that out, because since that's the only time the word is ever used in the New Testament, we see that what Paul is getting out when he speaks of no condemnation, he's not talking about the opinion that other people have of you.

12:53

He's not talking about the opinion that you have of yourself.

12:57

He's speaking directly of the just judgment that God has handed down against sin. And because of our identification with Adam, because of the sin that's present in our own life, he says, that is there you in AI, and every one of us face that just judgment. That's what he means by condemnation. But then he says, Therefore, however, it's been taken away.

13:17

It's been taken away. And you ask, well, how does that happen? How could that happen? Why does that happen? How does that happen? There are two options. The first option is that either somehow you have removed that from yourself, you have done everything perfectly, you have checked off every single box, you have never once deviated in the slightest, from God's will. And God's command. That's one possibility. But that doesn't exist. We know that. I don't have to tell you that about yourself. I know that about myself. Every single person has sinned and fallen short of glory of God. So if it's not us who can take it away, then the only other option is that God Himself has dealt with it.

13:53

13:55

The God Himself has removed it from us.

13:56

The sentence that hangs above us because of our thoughts, our words, our actions, all those things God Himself has dealt with. And we say, well, how did God do that?

14:06

That's what Paul goes through in verses three and four. He charges on writing verses three and four when he said God did for us, but we could not do for ourselves. That's in verse three. Just beginning there. He said, For God is done with the law we can by the flesh could not do God did for you when you can't do for yourself. And then he goes on to say by sending His Son,

14:25

the incarnation. That's the heart of the Advent season, right? We're preparing to celebrate the fact that Jesus came to God Himself, took on flesh and came among us by sending His Son by sending a son he goes on to say in the likeness, of sinful flesh and for sin. Jesus was made like us in every way except for sin doesn't say that he was sinful. He said, he came in our likeness. We are sinful. We came in our likeness, but he came for sin, in order to deal with it. That's what he means by sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh he made like us in every single way.

15:00

so that he can do for us when we could not do for ourselves and it said in Jesus, then God condemned sin in the flesh. In the flesh, God condemn sin, Jesus death for himself was not for his own actions. He wasn't sinful. He didn't have anything to atone for in his own life. It wasn't for him, it was for us.

15:17

That's what he's getting at here said God dealt with this He condemned sin in the flesh, you want to know if your sin is dealt with it is? How do you know because the death sentence has been carried out.

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It's been handed down. It's been fulfilled just not by you. It's done for you.

15:33

And he goes on to say that happened in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be

fulfilled with us. And remember that every blessing that God provided has been done for you and given to you in order that all the consequences have been taken away from you. This is what God has done to remove that. And this is incredible, good news. There's no news as good as this because I think most of us know the burden of a guilty conscience is a heavy, heavy thing to bear.

15:59

How often do any of us suffer because of the guilt or the shame that we carry around as a result of the things that we have said or done or not said or not done?

16:08

Some of the most powerful pieces of literature really explore this theme and in great depth. One good example is theater Dostoyevsky's classic novel Crime and Punishment. If you know this story, there's a man named Raskolnikov. Who, who convinces himself that it would be okay for him to commit this crime to commit this murder. He justifies it, he chose all these logical reasons why this is an okay thing for me to do. And I shouldn't feel bad about it afterwards, because it's entirely justifiable, so he does it. And the whole novel is about him just breaking down mentally, physically, tracks, his anguish has all these repercussions build up the self loathing that he just carries around, we can't carry that kind of guilt around.

16:46

A similar idea and a much shorter and pretty equally powerful form is, you know, Edgar Allan Poe's tale, the tell tale heart, right, somebody got killed, somebody buries him under the floor. And he's just convinced that that heartbeat is there for everybody to know that he is guilty. We can't carry around that sense of the things that we have done wrong. Now. Look, I hope that none of you are dealing with something as serious or dramatic as a brutal murder that you're trying to hide from other people. But I know that there's something that's weighing on your heart.

17:16

I know there's something that's there.

17:19

Something you've said something you've done something that eats away at you.

17:24

Maybe it's a relationship that ended because of something you did, maybe it's the way you treated your spouse or your kids, maybe it's the anger, the jealousy or the pride that you just like to secretly cultivate within. Maybe it's the websites you visit or the comments that you post on social media, maybe it's your in attentiveness to God, what weighs heavy on your heart?

17:44

What do you wish that no one else would know about? Because it doesn't align with the way that you try to present yourself to the world? What's that thing? Think of that?

17:52

And then hear this

17:54

no condemnation? For those who are in Christ Jesus, how do I know that because my sin has been fully and finally dealt with. How do I know that because Jesus Christ has done for me, what I can do for myself. This is the first thing that we see in this passage, talks about the spirit of life uniting us to Jesus and because of what he has done because of who he is.

18:15

Our sin has been taken away. That's the first thing we see. Here's the second thing. Paul goes on to talk about the spirit of life dwelling within us. And that leads us to live in ways that reflect Jesus. If the Spirit of Life is dwelling within us, then we're going to live in ways that bear witness to that. This is another pay place in the letter. We've seen several different examples. So far in other places in the letter, Paul puts out these contrasting options, and they're mutually exclusive ones. We've seen a few different examples so far here, he talks about flesh, in sin

18:48

was in again, the parts of verses six through down to six through seven and eight, beginning sorry, beginning of verse four, pardon me.

18:56

He says, We walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit for those who live according to the flesh, that their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For the set the mind on the flesh is death, but the set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

19:15

You setting out these these contrasts here. These are very important ones. They're very, they're very important biblical concepts that are also easy to misunderstand. So let me just help define them for us here. When he's talking about flesh, and spirit. The contrast here is not between something that is

material or tangible and something that is immaterial or ethereal the contrast is not between your physical body and some kind of mystical apparition. Flesh in Scripture. When the New Testament authors use it almost always refers to our sinful, this world centered nature and desire and actions. It's a way to describe the thoughts and actions, the words and desires that flow up out of us. It's a way to describe the heart that is offered up in idolatry, the hands that are engaged in injustice, and

20:00

A mouth that is full of deceit that's flesh. So when Paul says later those in the flesh cannot please God, He's not saying anybody who has a body is incapable of pleasing God, he is saying those whose hearts and minds hands and mouths are firmly set against God and established in their pursuit of other things, cannot please Him.

20:21

That's what he says in verse seven, listen to that, again.

20:24

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, it cannot submit to God's law, it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it cannot. He setting out this contrast here, and flesh, we've seen this idea come up in the letter, he hasn't used these particular terms before we've seen this idea. That's our default setting. For every one of us, is something that can only change when we are brought out of that, by the grace of God through the work of the Spirit. And when the Spirit works to remove our Hearts of Stone to give us new hearts, when that Spirit dwells within us. It renews our minds after the image and likeness of Jesus. That's what he's getting at in verse nine, when he says, Anyone who does not have you, however, not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you, you're not in the flesh, he says, You're in the Spirit, if in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if there sometimes we use that word to indicate uncertainty, right, it means like, maybe the Spirit dwells in you. Maybe the spirit doesn't dwell on you. I'm not too sure he's not getting it uncertainty there. Every believer has the Spirit dwelling in them because we cannot come to faith in Jesus Christ unless the Spirit is working in us. So if there functions more like this, think of it like this. Suppose I said, if you come to Belfield this morning, then you're going to hear a sermon on Romans eight. Now, when I'm speaking not to a group of people hitting here and sitting here in the sanctuary, it means because you are here this morning, you're hearing a sermon on Romans eight. So when Paul was speaking to believers at this point, saying, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, and the Spirit dwells in you, and because the Spirit dwells in you, you need to live in these new ways, because you've been brought to life in the last couple chapters of this letter. I'm just introducing that topic. Now. We've touched on it a few times, but the last few chapters of this letter really get into that. So you know, stick around, we'll get we'll get to those eventually. But he's really showing what a new life lived out, looks like.

22:15

The Spirit of Life unites us to Jesus, taking away our condemnation restoring us to a right relationship with God. That's the first thing that's described here. And then the spirit of light brings us to life, leading us to live in new ways. That's the second thing that's described here. Now, here's the third

and for as exciting as those other ones were, this might even be the most exciting here's the third the spirits will raise us in the end, just as Jesus himself was raised.

22:45

Spirits gonna raise us in the end, just as Jesus himself was at the mercy of what I've been telling you here, the incredible work of the Spirit is to unite us to Jesus Christ so thoroughly, that whatever is true of him, becomes true of us what happened to Jesus after he died?

22:58

He was raised from the dead. Right What will happen to those who belong to Jesus after they die, and when he returns,

23:06

they will be raised with Him, and like him.

23:10

Listen to verse 11, sounding verse.

23:14

If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who dwells in you, saying that the Spirit dwells in you, then the same thing that happened to Jesus, will happen for you. That's what happens through this free gift that we have received. It comes by grace, through faith, a God who raised Jesus from the dead will do the same thing. This is the this is really the great promise of the Christian faith.

23:44

The same Jesus who came as a babe in the manger is going to come again, as the exalted King scripture says he's going to make all things new. He's going to bring about the full restoration of all of creation. Paul gets into that, actually, next passage, we'll see that in just a few verses, Paul gets into that, that he will bring about the full restoration of all of creation. And part of that means that those who belong to him will be raised in glory with him to participate in that, in the fullness of that new creation, with the one who has stripped bare the power of the grave through His resurrection.

24:17

So the same spirit that raised Jesus will raise us just as he was, these are the things that Paul was talking about here. He's talking about the spirit of life, says he will unite you to Jesus, and because of

that, your condemnation is gone.

24:32

The spirits gonna bring you to life and because of that, there's new ways that you need to live out in this world. And if the Spirit is dwelling to you, then he's also going to bring you to life eternally, and in glory in the end.

24:44

Now, much like last week, you might be wondering how all of this connects to advance. I mean, I didn't talk about wise men or activities or Bethlehem or angels or anything like that.

24:55

Even when Paul is speaking about the work of the Spirit, he's talking about what the Spirit does.

25:00

To unite us to Jesus, to remake us in the image of Jesus, and to grant us the promise of resurrection just like Jesus. So I hope you can start to connect these dots here without Jesus, none of these things will be possible. Without Jesus, none of these things would mean anything. Without Jesus, there wouldn't be any grounding any certainty, any assurance of that any of this stuff is actually true. This is just Paul talking wishful thinking to us.

25:24

But if he is come, and if he is coming again,

25:30

then we see that these things are true.

25:33

Admin is about celebrating the arrival of Jesus God sent His son here it said, in order to do for us we could not do for ourselves and had he not done that, then none of this would mean anything. But Advents also about training our hearts to anticipate the return of Jesus, when all of these promises are going to find their perfect and final fulfillment. So in our event, we celebrate, and we anticipate, we celebrate and we anticipate all of these things that a passage like this describes to us and all of these things that a passage like this describes to us are only true in and because of Jesus. One, two is come. And the one is coming again.

26:09

Let's pray.

26:12

Majestic and merciful God, we thank you for the wonderful promises of your word.

26:18

For the astounding, good news of what you have done for us in Jesus and what that means for us.

26:25

Help us to see those things in new ways.

26:28

by your Spirit, Lord, strengthen us and encourage us. We pray all this in Christ's name.

26:35

Amen.