



**Romans 8:9-17**  
**A Spirit-Filled Summer**  
**Life In The Spirit**

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A mother was seeing her 8 year-old son off to school one morning. She walked him to the bus stop where they waited patiently; the bus came and her son got on the school bus. The mother proceeded to go home so she could get ready to go to work. About 15 minutes later the doorbell rang and it was her son at the front door. She was shocked to see him since she just got him on the school bus. Then she noticed the school bus with its door open, in front of her house. The mother asked her son, “What are you doing back home?” Her 8 year-old son said, “I'm quitting school. It's too hard, it's too boring, and it's too long.” The mother looked at him and said, “That's life, now get back on the bus.”<sup>i</sup>

I love that story. The response totally aligns with my parenting philosophy: Help kids’ expectations for life line up with reality. Life can be hard. It can be boring. And while it isn’t necessarily too long, there certainly are things in life that seem to last forever. Like Covid-19. The last four months seem to have lasted a lot longer. Or spring. Here in the Pacific Northwest, the calendar may say it’s summer...but it sure doesn’t feel like it. It’s the eternal spring.

**So sometimes we might feel like life is too hard, too boring and too long. But does it need to be that way?** Is that just the way life is – wake up, eat, sleep, go about some meaningless tasks, have some relationships via zoom or facetime, go to bed, then repeat it all the next day? Maybe life feels that way to you right now, or perhaps at other times. Maybe that’s a regular and consistent view of life for you.

Today’s passage in Romans gives us a little insight, and opens up a whole world of passages from the Bible that help us see a fuller picture of what life is all about. So as we continue our series on the Holy Spirit called, “A Spirit-Filled Summer” I invite you to turn to Romans 8. We were in the first 11 verses of this chapter last week, and we will re-read a bit of that passage as we start in verse 9 today and to through verse 17. This is God’s word to you and me today...(Romans 8:9-17 Here)

So there are four things that we learn about life and living that can help shape our view of our own lives. I'll touch on them briefly then go a little deeper. The first thing to note here is that: **The Spirit is living.** This is the Holy Spirit Paul is writing of here. The Spirit is not dead, it's not defunct, and it's not defeated. The Spirit is alive and well. We see this in verses 9 and 11 where Paul writes about the living Spirit.

The second thing to note is that: **For those who have put their trust in Jesus, the Spirit is alive in us.** Again, verses 9 and 11 make it clear that the Holy Spirit is not just alive in a general sense, but that he is alive in believers.

Third: **We see that this means: we live.** And not just in the sense that we have heart that beats and lungs that breathe. It's a whole other level of "living" that Paul writes of. For instance, verse 12 reads, **"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" (Romans 8:12).** Paul is contrasting those who live "by the flesh" with those who live by the Spirit. Both are living in the physical sense. But those who live by the flesh are like dead men and dead women who are still alive. They're like zombies. Spiritual zombies. But when we live by the Spirit, and if we put to death the things of the flesh – in other words, if we put sin in our lives to death – then we live. We have a different level of living than we would otherwise experience. So the Spirit gives us real life.

And then lastly, we see that: **Those who live by the Spirit are children of God.** We see it in a few places in the last few verses, such as verse 14: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God" (Romans 8:14). There's a whole new life that begins through the Spirit, a whole new family that we become a part of. We looked a couple weeks ago or so at the whole "born again" theme that Jesus speaks of and that he says comes from the Spirit. Paul, here, is picking up on a similar kind of theme. When you are "born again" through faith in Jesus, you become a child of God. And all of that happens through the work of the spirit who lives, lives in us, and gives us life. But it's not a life on our own, it's a life with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with the Spirit in particular living in us, and it's a life with other

children of God who have the Holy Spirit in them as well.

The summary of all of this is that: **Life in the Spirit is how we were meant to live.** And as I typed those words I thought of the Switchfoot song called, “Meant to Live.” For those of you who don’t know, Switchfoot is a Christian band who have been around for close to 25 years. Their song “Meant to Live” was a big hit on both Christian and secular radio. The lyrics help us understand this passage from Romans:

**“We were meant to live for so much more  
Have we lost ourselves?  
Somewhere we live inside  
Somewhere we live inside  
We were meant to live for so much more  
Have we lost ourselves?  
Somewhere we live inside**

**We want more than this world's got to offer  
We want more than this world's got to offer  
We want more than the wars of our fathers  
And everything inside screams for second life”  
(*Meant to Live, Switchfoot*)**

You see, without the Spirit we miss out on so much of what we are meant to live for. And if we are always looking *outside* of ourselves to gain meaning and value from the world, we’re going to miss the true source of real life. “Somewhere we live inside” as they sing in the chorus. **The Spirit is in us, and that’s the source of real life.** The Spirit is in us to lead us – it cries out for, even screams for – second life, this new life, led by the Spirit, as children of God.

There’s so much good news in this passage. I mean, we could spend the next few Sundays looking at this. But let me share a couple practical outcomes of this. **First, because the Spirit lives in us, because we are adopted as children of God into His family: You are not alone.** You may not always see God or sense his presence. You may not see your brothers and sisters in Christ. But they are there. Haven’t we experienced that quite profoundly in

the last four months? Other than a handful of us who have been recording services, we haven't gotten together for worship here in the sanctuary since the first Sunday in March. Until today. We have some 30-35 people here this morning. Worship is a reminder that we're not in this alone. When you watch online and share a comment in the comments section on YouTube, or on Facebook when we had the services live there as well, it's a reminder that we're not in this alone. I loved seeing everyone's "good morning" on the Facebook live videos the last several months.

But even when we can't see each other, and of course we can't see God ever, a passage like this one reminds us that we aren't actually alone. **We are part of a bigger family – the family of God – even if we can't see all members of the family all the time.**

I came across a story this week that illustrates this for us really well. In a rural area a farmer was tending to his horse named Buddy, and along came a man who desperately needed the farmer's help. The man had lost control of his vehicle and ran it off into a ditch. The man asked the farmer if his horse could somehow pull the vehicle out of the ditch for him; the vehicle wasn't very large, and thought it might be possible. The farmer said he would come, bring his horse, and take a look, but could not promise he could help if his horse might be injured in some way from attempting to pull the vehicle out of the ditch.

The farmer did see that the man was correct and that the vehicle was small, so the farmer took a rope and fixed it so that his horse, Buddy, would be able to pull the vehicle out of the ditch. Then the farmer then said, "Pull, Casey, Pull," but the horse would not budge. The farmer then said, "Pull, Bailey, Pull," but the horse would not budge again. The farmer then said, "Pull, Mandy, Pull," and again the horse would not move. The farmer then said, "Pull, Buddy, Pull," and the horse pulled until the vehicle was out of the ditch.

The man who owned the vehicle was so very grateful, but puzzled about why the farmer had called the horse by different names. The farmer said, "Well, Buddy is blind, and I had to make him think he had help pulling the car out

of the ditch or he would not have pulled.”

You see: **Life in the Spirit, and with the Spirit in us, isn't just about what we can see, taste, and touch.** It's believing that God is with us through the presence of His life-giving Spirit in us, and knowing others are “with” us through prayer, through sharing our faith, and through the presence of the Spirit with us. This gives us such a boost in life. It encourages us. It strengthens us. It makes life so much more enjoyable and motivates us to keep going. And so with the Spirit in us and in others drawing us together through faith in Jesus Christ, we experience real life. Life as God intended it.

And when we get away from that... **When we get away from living by faith and living by the Spirit, then we aren't really living at all.** Paul says in verse 14 that if we live according to the flesh you will die. He doesn't mean death as in: your heart stops beating. It's death as in: zest for life, for enjoying life, for wanting the best for yourself and for others...living life to the full in a relationship with our Heavenly Father who has made life possible to begin with. We lose all of that when we live according to the flesh...and it's not really living at all. But when we live by the Spirit, we experience life as it's meant to be, and one of those things is that we are not alone. We are together with the Spirit and with each other.

And then: **The second thing I want to highlight is what we “share in” with Jesus Christ.** It comes out of verse 17 that “...if we are children of God, we are co-heirs with Christ – if we share in his sufferings in order that we may share in his glory” (Romans 8:17). Now for sure, this is speaking of life, and in particular life eternal. That's the glory that we share in that ends this verse. But we also share in Christ's sufferings. How?

Well, Christ is the head of the church, we are the body. And as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:26 – if one member of the body suffers, we all suffer with that person. That includes Jesus, the head of this body called the Church. After all, Jesus suffered on the cross because of our sin, and on our behalf. How dare we not suffer with him? How dare we, for example, not have remorse and grief over our sin that held him there, on the cross. The great hymn “How Deep the Father's Love For Us” puts it well:

**It was my sin that held Him there  
 Until it was accomplished  
 His dying breath has brought me life  
 I know that it is finished  
 (“How Deep The Father’s Love For Us”)**

Our sin held him there. He suffered for you and me. And: **We still suffer with him in that pain and agony, even as we celebrate that his “dying breath has brought us life.”**

So the Spirit, who is living, who lives in us, who gives us life, who makes us children of God by bringing us into the family of God...this Life giving Spirit draws us together as one, and as one with Christ. And praise God for that, because ultimately it does lead not only to life as God intended – what Jesus calls abundant life – but it also leads to life eternal. That’s his glory that we get to share. It’s the glory of the Resurrection.

And ultimately and finally that is the Life that the Spirit gives us. **How is the Spirit of God moving in you to give you life?** With all that is going on in the world around us, it can be easy to miss the Spirit’s movement. It’s easy to get caught up in the negativity of so much that is going on and it can really suck the life out of us. But God’s Spirit is moving nonetheless, and still living inside of us and giving us life and calling us to live as the body of Christ as children’ of God. Even if we can’t see it...like a blind horse pulling a vehicle out of the ditch...Jesus promised that he’d send his Holy Spirit – and this passage from Paul reminds us that this life-giving Spirit lives in us.

So I invite you to live with a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit’s life-giving presence in our daily lives and into eternity. It’s a life that’s very unlike school for an 8-year old. It’s a life that’s not too hard, long, or boring. Life need not be that way. In fact, it’s not how God intended it to be. There is a zest to life that the Spirit gives...a sense of connection to others that inspires us, lifts us up, sustains us in difficult times...And we have the opportunity to do that for others as well – to be there for other people as the Spirit moves in us to bless others so that they might have abundant life...a

life led by the Spirit. In fact, that serving of others brings more life to our living than anything else. That's when we have a real sense of purpose and mission and a real sense of the Spirit living in us.

So all of that is living as God intends: on the bus with Jesus at the wheel, with the Holy Spirit living in us and drawing us into our Heavenly Father's family here and into eternity where we share in Christ's glory. Let's pray...Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://letterpile.com/humor/Life-Lessons-Stories-That-Will-Make-You-Laugh>