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No Condemnation. No Bondage. New Life.

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Series: Be Free

Romans 8:1-11

BIG IDEA - FREEDOM, TRANSFORMATION, AND THE ASSURANCE THAT GOD IS AT WORK IN YOU RIGHT NOW

At all of our campuses, happy Mother's Day. If you're just finding out it's Mother's Day, you are in trouble. Okay, guys? Happy Mother's Day. We love moms. I bet my mom is watching from South Carolina, so happy Mother's Day, Mom. I'm so grateful for Margy, the mother of our children.

Guys, we love moms. Moms are such a big deal that even God needed one. Mary shows up. She is Jesus' mom, and you cannot tell the story of the birth or the life or the ministry of Jesus Christ apart from his mom. In fact, you may have heard that Jesus Christ is the head of the church. That's true. But guess who the backbone of the church is? Mom.

So, moms in here and across all of our campuses, I'm going to embarrass you just for a second. If you're a mom, stand up, because we want to celebrate you on Mother's Day. Stand up and stay standing. I want you to know you are the reason our kids ministry has 900 kids. Remain standing if you've become a mom for the first time in the last two years. Everybody else sit. Look around in this room. We love all of the new moms. All right. You can be seated.

Listen. Mother's Day, Memorial Day... You know what that means. It means summer is here, basically. It means, kids, school is almost out. The pool is almost open. Hopefully the vacation is booked. My family and I are uniquely looking forward to this summer because the church and the elders have given us the unique gift of a sabbatical.

For the next eight weeks, I'm going to be on sabbatical, which means this is, sadly, my last sermon to you guys for two months. I will be back July 12, picking up exactly where

we're leaving off today in Romans, chapter 8. But you will not be too sad, because next week we have Lee Strobel here. That's exciting. I encourage you to bring your "one." It's going to be great.

Then, my former pastor Andy Davis, who has memorized the entire New Testament... That's not a joke. I know; he's kind of intense. He'll be here the week after. Guys, we're actually going to have eight incredible speakers. You're not even going to miss me. It's going to be a great time. I am so grateful for this gift. Love you guys. Let's pray and get to work.

Lord, thank you for moms. It has been said, "Nobody grew up poor who had a godly mom." I think that probably no one has led more people to Christ than moms. Their teaching, their influence, their prayers, and their examples are felt. Most people in human history probably came to Christ, in part, through the influence of a godly mom. I pray for encouragement to moms who feel tired and overwhelmed, and we particularly pray for women in our church who so desire to be a mom but are not for some reason.

They're not getting to be a mom right now because they're not married or because, for some reason, they can't get pregnant and stay pregnant. Part of one of the themes of Scripture is that you are the one who opens the womb, Lord. We ask, especially on Mother's Day, Lord, that you would do that. We know that hope deferred makes the heart sick. We pray that you would bless every Christian family in our church with children. We ask this in your name, amen.

What's your favorite Bible verse? Most people have a favorite Bible verse. Right? There's the end zone verse. You know the end zone verse, right? A guy doesn't have his shirt on. He's in the end zone. He's got a sign up. "John 3:16." For some of you, it's Jeremiah 29:11. You don't care that it's out of context. "God has a plan for you." It doesn't matter. Romans 8:28. We'll get there. "God is going to work all things out for good."

So, some people have favorite verses. Some people have favorite chapters. If I ask, "What is your favorite chapter?" a lot of people will say, "Psalm 23." "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Other people might say, "Psalm 139," because it talks about how God knows me and will never leave me and knit me together in my mother's womb. Well, I think I can say there's no chapter more famous and more beloved by Christians for 2,000 years than Romans, chapter 8. So let's turn there.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones... He was a medical doctor who became a pastor, and they nicknamed him "The Doctor" for the rest of his ministry. He preached through the book of Romans, and when he got to chapter 8, he gave 23 sermons in this chapter. I promise you I will not do that, but we *will* be here for a while.

John Piper (you guys have heard of him; he's a famous pastor), when he was preaching through the book of Romans, said Romans 8 is the filet mignon of the Bible. (Sorry to all you vegetarians out there.) Guys, here's what Romans 8 is about. I don't want you to forget this. Maybe I'll mention it in two months.

There are two major themes in Romans. I want you to know these. I'll just give them to you: *security* and the *Holy Spirit*. Security in the Spirit. *Security*. In other words, what we're going to see so far is Romans 1-3 is a bunch of bad news. "You're a sinner. Everybody is a sinner. I don't care if you're self-righteous and religious or unrighteous and rebellious. Everybody is a sinner." Thanks for being here. Thanks for keeping on coming after the first three chapters, because that was really depressing.

Chapters 4 and 5 are like, "But by faith in Christ, we can be saved from the penalty of our sin." That was the example of Abraham. Chapters 6 and 7 are "Now we can be sanctified. We can put sin to death." But basically, last week was not that encouraging. It was all about our struggle with sin.

Chapter 8 is all about your eternal security and safety. It starts with "No condemnation" (Romans 8:1). At the very end of Romans 8, it ends with "No separation." It's all about safety. By the way, whether you admit it or not, you're obsessed with safety and security.

Do you lock your car? Yes. Do you lock your house? Yes. Do you set the alarm at night? Yes. Do you have face recognition on your phone? Yeah. What is all this stuff about? Am I the only one tired of two-step verification? Amen. Right? We can agree on one thing today. I mean, I don't want to open up my YouTube app again. "It's me. Trust this device." Right?

So, there is this whole idea of security and safety that we're going to talk about. The second is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the most mysterious person of the Trinity, and most Christians do not understand him. Most Christians' functional Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Bible. In Romans 1-7, the Holy Spirit... Now, remember, this is like the treatise of theology in the New Testament.

In Romans 1-7, how many times is the Holy Spirit mentioned? Five. Not even once per chapter. In Romans, chapter 8, which we're going to be spending several weeks in, how many times is the Holy Spirit mentioned? Twenty-one times. He indwells the believer, leads the believer, comforts the believer, prays for the believer. We'll see all of this.

So, with that said, here's what I want to do today. I want us to focus on the first 11 verses, the introduction of Romans 8. We'll start in verse 1. Let's read it together. "***There is therefore...***" Pastors love to say this. If there's a *therefore*, you need to ask what it is there for. Romans 8:1 exists to encourage you in light of chapter 7.

Chapter 7 is like, "You're still a sinner, and sin still dwells in you, and you still don't do things you want to do, but the things you hate you keep doing." At the end, it's like... I tried to make it as encouraging as it can be. He's like, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" So, in light of that... You know, the chapters in the Bible weren't added until the twelfth century, so there's no chapter division here, really. The end of chapter 7 goes right into chapter 8.

Here's what it says. **"There is therefore now..."** So, not just later but now. **"...no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."** Now, this is very important. What is *condemnation*? Guilt with judgment. Guilt with a sentence. Guilt with punishment. In fact, the Romans used the same word as a shorthand for execution.

Now, here's what it says. There's now (*now* is an important word) no condemnation for those who are in Christ. So, verse 1 of chapter 8 only works for Christians. You are either in Christ or you are in danger. I don't think I can be any more clear. You are either in Christ or you're in trouble.

Now, being *in* something... If you're married, you're in a covenant. If your parents are responsible, you're in a will, even if you don't know it. You're in something. Now, we have to talk about this just for a second. This is why the mission of the church is so urgent: because there's only no condemnation found in Christ.

Just so you know, we're not playing games when we're like, "Hey, who's one person who's far from God and close to you?" That's not a sociological experiment to make you feel better about yourself. I mean, it's going to cost us a lot of money to plant churches. It's not a game. This is not imperialism and colonialism, and we're not franchising and just expanding to expand or whatever. We actually believe people need to meet Jesus to be forgiven of their sins.

Do you know how hard it is to be a missionary? You have to go learn a language and cross an ocean and become like an infant again and take your kids away from their grandparents. I mean, this is a big deal. Why do we do this? Because the mission is urgent, because there *is* condemnation apart from Christ. But I want to focus on the positive part for Christians. "There is now no condemnation."

Okay. Here's what he *doesn't* say. He doesn't say simply, "You're not condemned." It's nice to occasionally be not condemned. Right? Has anyone here ever gotten a speeding ticket? Come on. Don't act like you never got one. Thank you. I see that hand. I got a speeding ticket. This was a long, long time ago, but I've gotten my speeding tickets.

So, I learned... If you don't know this, whenever you get pulled over, the first thing you do is put your window down and put your hands out. It's like a sign of submission. Police

officers love that. So, I get pulled over. This was a long time ago, but I remember I got pulled over, and I was wrong. "Why are you speeding?" and all this kind of stuff. He didn't even ask for my license this time. He said, "I'm going to give you just a warning. You can go ahead."

There is no one happier driving away than the person who just escaped a speeding ticket. You're like, "Praise Jesus. I will never speed again." That's not being condemned one time. Paul said something different. He said there is now...right now...no condemnation. In other words, it's not like there's no condemnation when you come to Christ, but as soon as you sin you're now condemned.

In fact, listen. This is interesting. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the same guy who preached the 23 sermons... He was a doctor, like I told you. He made an interesting observation. He basically said, "I actually think a lot of people's relational problems with each other are that they don't believe there's no condemnation." He was like, "Think about it. Why are some of you so defensive? It's borderline awkward. We can't give you any feedback. We can't give you any criticism."

Listen. As soon as you understand that you're not condemned, you can actually talk about your sin. You can go, "You know what? Yeah, I am a sinner. Yeah, I'm not the dad I want to be." "I'm not the wife I want to be." "I'm not the husband I want to be." You can be honest about your sin because you know, even as horrible as it is, you're not ultimately condemned.

He said so many people's problems of being insecure and confident and trying to compare and compete and contrast all come out of this idea that we don't believe God no longer has anything against us. As Paul is going to say later, not only is he not against us but he's now completely for us.

Now, let me explain something, because Christians may say, "Well, hold on. I still feel bad about my sin." Okay. That's called *conviction*, not *condemnation*. You want to feel conviction. I mean, one of the things I pray when I'm preaching... I *want* you guys to feel conviction.

Here's the difference. *Condemnation* is a sweeping judgment over your life, going, "You're nothing. God doesn't love you. You can never be forgiven." *Conviction* is a specific sorrow over a specific sin. *Condemnation* is about destruction; *conviction* is about restoration. It's God the Father's voice that brings conviction; it's Satan's voice that tries to bring condemnation.

So, we're going to spend the rest of the time looking at what this means that there's no condemnation. Look at verse 2. In verse 2, he describes this more. He says, "**For the law**

of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. So, he's going to start talking (this is where we're going to spend a lot of our time today) about the Holy Spirit.

He said there's a law I haven't mentioned yet. He's like, "I've been talking about the law of sin and death." He has a lot of good things to say about the law, but basically, Paul calls it the *law of sin and death* because that's where it leads. It leads to sin and death.

He said there's another law, or you can think a principle or a power or a pattern, that's even higher than the written law. It's called the *law of the Spirit of life*, and he says it actually liberates you. So, there's not only no condemnation; there's liberation. He tells you how in verses 3 and 4. Look at what he says here. These two verses are the heart of the Christian message, so if you're new, lean in here.

"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh..." That's you. So, God has done what you can't do. That's the heart of the gospel. ***"...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 walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."***

Okay, there's a lot there. Here's what I want us to know. We're going to put our thinking caps on together for a little bit, and then it's going to get really practical at the end. Christians are Trinitarian in our understanding of God, in our worship. It doesn't mean that we fully can... A God we could fully understand is a God we couldn't fully worship. God is mysterious. He is above us. He is different than us.

The Bible says there is one God, but there are three persons in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If you look, all three persons are mentioned in those two verses...God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. This language is important, and I didn't come up with this. This is from 2,000 years of church history thinking about this. They are coequal. They are coeternal. They share a divine will, and they share a divine essence. They always work together, and they never work against each other.

So, here's what I want you to understand about your salvation. Your salvation involved all three members of the Trinity. God the Father planned it, God the Son accomplished it, and God the Holy Spirit applies it to your heart. So, the first thing we're told is God decided... God isn't passive; God is active. God decided to do something about our sinful condition. In fact, it's more than that. God planned this.

Here's what I want you to know. God did not just react or respond to our sinful condition. He didn't watch Adam and Eve sin in the garden and go, "I've got to do something about

this. What am I going to do about this?" It said God planned for Christ to die for sinners even before the foundation of the world.

Sometimes we say the gospel and miss part of it. We'll say something like, "Christ died for you so that God could love you." That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that he sent his Son to die." The love of God the Father is what motivated him to send the Son to remove all barriers to having a relationship with you.

So, God the Father *planned* salvation. Then it says the Son *accomplishes* salvation. Notice, by the way, it says God sent his only Son. I want you to understand this. Sending is at the heart of Christianity. We serve a sending God. If you've ever wondered (and you *should* wonder these things) why at the end of our service...

Maybe you've been to church all your life and have never at the end of a service (and we do it at the end of *every* service) had people say, "Two Cities Church, you are sent." I mean, we don't have to say that. We could say something different. Why do we say that?

Well, if you think about it, what is the whole story of Scripture? God sends his Son Jesus. Jesus, after his life, death, and resurrection, sends the Spirit. In John 14, he says, "I'm going to go away, and I'm going to send you the Spirit. In fact, it's better that I go away so I can send you the Spirit." Then, in the book of Acts, we constantly see the Holy Spirit sending the church. So, when we say, "Hey, guys, wherever you live, learn, work, and play, we want you to live sent," we're just trying to be biblical.

Now, it says that Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh. In other words, he took on a human nature. Basically, Jesus was just like you and me but without sinning. He was, as they say, truly God and truly man. What's interesting is the story of a father sending the son to earth to save a people is... Well, it's every Avengers movie, isn't it? Isn't that the story of Superman? Isn't that kind of the story of Thor?

The difference is that he didn't send him to be some kind of superhero and take over the world; he sent him, it says, to be condemned. Now, that's not an accident. The Bible doesn't say, "There's no condemnation for you, but God sent his Son to be condemned." No. Jesus was condemned so that you would come under no condemnation ever.

But Paul wants to spend more time talking about verse 4. Let me show you this. This is where he's going to unpack the rest of this part. He says, "**...in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**"

Basically, what happens is when Christ lives, dies, and rises from the dead... When we place our trust in him, the righteous requirement of the law has been fulfilled, not *by us*

but *in* us. Then it says, "**...who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**" That's what I want to talk about for the rest of our time. What does it look like to walk according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh?

There are three movements in your Christian life. Unfortunately, most people don't get past movement one. Movement one is you are to be *forgiven*. It's like, "I transfer trust to Jesus. Forgiveness defines my life." That's the first *F*. The second *F* is *freedom*. Some Christians don't get here. They're forgiven, but they're not walking in the freedom. They're not walking in the freedom from their past sins, from their past in general.

So, there's forgiveness. There's freedom. There's a third one: *fruitfulness*. This is the life in the Spirit. In other words, you're not just supposed to say, "Yes, I'm forgiven, and yes, I'm saying no to sin." You're supposed to say yes to righteousness and live a fruitful life.

Well, in verse 5, Paul says this. Look here. "**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.**" What's the difference between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit, and how would you know if you're doing one or the other?

By the way, you have to notice there are only two options. There's not a third option for you. You can't walk in the flesh and in the Spirit at the same time. The Bible is binary...heaven, hell; angels, demons; male, female; Creator, creation; Spirit, flesh. The Bible gives you only two options.

How do you know if you're walking in the flesh or walking in the Spirit? Well, John Calvin... He was a famous Christian. He basically said that when it comes to walking in the flesh, there is the *obvious* flesh and the *respectable* flesh. They're both sinful, and God hates both of them.

See, most Christians only think about the obvious flesh. You can find this. This would be a good study to do with your Community Group. If you go to Galatians 5, Paul says there is the fruit of the Spirit (that's interesting), but right afterward he says there are the works of the flesh.

Then he makes this big list. Basically, the works of the flesh are all of the things that probably even the world would admit, "Yeah, we probably shouldn't be doing that." It's fits of rage. It's sexual immorality. It's public drunkenness. It's all of those things. And here's the thing. After you've been a Christian for a while, you're like, "Okay, I shouldn't do those things, or at least I shouldn't do those things publicly." Even though you know they're wrong, you might struggle with them privately.

Calvin said it's very easy to focus on "Oh, I don't walk in the obvious flesh," but you might walk in the respectable flesh. See, here's what the obvious flesh is. The *obvious* flesh is Drag Queen Story Hour. It's like a character of culture. It's like, "Oh, that's debauchery. It's strange in multiple ways. It's against God's design." It's easy for the church or Christians to pick on *that*.

The *respectable* flesh is what Paul says in Galatians 3. He said, "Are you trying to finish in the flesh what God started in the Spirit?" It's all about self-sufficiency. It's all about religious performance. It's all about internal pride. The respectable flesh is the flesh people bring to church. They judge other people.

The respectable flesh is you feeling good about you because you don't struggle with certain sins that other people struggle with. It's not that hard over time, with accountability, to walk away from the obvious flesh. It's much harder to walk away from the respectable flesh.

If you want a book on this, Jerry Bridges (he's now dead and with the Lord) wrote a book with an interesting title...*Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate*. He lists 12 respectable sins, like impatience, that are respected today (they show up in your staff meeting; they show up in the elder board; they show up at the dining room table), and they're often not confronted.

Then, what does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Well, there is what is called the *visible Spirit* and the *invisible Spirit*. These are other categories. Basically, you have to understand... This is the great thing about it being 2026. Christians have thought about this for way... They didn't have Netflix, so they just thought about this forever.

The *visible Spirit* is the fruit of the Spirit. You probably memorized it. "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control." By the way, Paul then says, "Against these things there is no law." What does *that* mean? You can't ever max them out. Isn't that cool? You can never max them out. You can never be too loving, too joyful, or too kind. You can't max them out.

He says walking in the Spirit is walking in the fruit of the Spirit. Also, walking in the Spirit is your life having an impact on other people for Christ and his kingdom for good...your influence, your teaching, your example, your discipleship...all that. Then he said there's the *invisible Spirit*. The invisible Spirit are all of the things you do in secret for Christ and his kingdom.

It has been said, "Nothing will tell you your condition like either secret sin or secret prayer." *Secret sin* is indulging the flesh; *secret prayer* is indulging the Spirit. Did you ever notice how often Jesus, in his most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, talks

about doing things in secret? He's like, "Go pray in secret. Close your door. Don't let anyone see you. Hey, give in secret. Don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

Part of the invisible Spirit is the person who falls on their knees at night and says, "God, I've got a couple of things I need to talk to you about. I need you to root this bitterness out of my heart. No one knows it's there, but I just want to wrestle with you in prayer and see what your Word says about it." That's the invisible Spirit.

Well, how? Right? We want to be practical. How do you walk in the Spirit and not walk in the flesh? Paul knows that's the next question, so he tells us how to do it. Verse 6: ***"For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit 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. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."***

So, if Paul is going to talk about walking in the Spirit or walking in the flesh, it's interesting that he first decides to talk about the mind. How do we think Christianly? Or other people talk about having a Christian worldview. See, here's what you need to know. Every person in here (actually, every person who exists) has a lens with which they see the world.

When you become a Christian, you get a different lens, a Christian mind. It's a different lens. This is important. You don't see a different reality; you see reality differently. So, how does the non-Christian mind see suffering? According to the flesh. "This is just meaningless. It's taking from me. There are no redemptive purposes."

How does the Christian mind see suffering? "This is an opportunity to glorify God. I know God is doing something in it even if I don't understand it. I know somehow this is going to work for my maturity and God's mission. I know I serve a God who suffered for me and suffers with me." The non-Christian mind looks at money and says, "Do I save it or do I spend it?" The Christian mind looks at money and says, "What does it look like to be a good steward?"

The non-Christian mind looks at marriage as a way of self-expression and self-fulfillment. The Christian mind goes, "This is an opportunity to be a picture of Christ and the church, and this is probably going to be the most sanctifying relationship in my life." Well, I want to help us on how we actually, practically, set our minds on the things of the Spirit. There are like 10 ways, but let me give you four ways.

First, you set your mind on the Spirit by what you give *attention* to. Most people don't bifurcate this (that means to make a difference), but basically, there's a big difference

between attention and thinking. Attention is upstream of thinking. It is impossible to change your thinking unless you change what you're paying attention to.

It's very interesting to walk into a room and go, "I'm not going to think; I'm going to pay attention." That'll be a different room for you. Then, whatever you pay attention to, you'll be thinking more. I think it was Netflix who coined the phrase *attention economy*. You've all had the experience. Right? You're like, "Okay. We don't need six streaming services, but they're \$12.99 a piece, so we just have them all."

Have you ever been like, "There is just so much on to watch"? Someone tells you to watch some show, and you're like, "There are six seasons to that show." Guys, we live in an attention economy where somebody is trying to get our attention all the time. By the way, you're not even the consumer; you're the product. They're trying to get your attention so they can sell your information to somebody else. That's literally what's happening. So, if you want to think differently, you need to pay attention to different things.

The second is *imagination*. If you want to change your thinking, change your imagination. What's interesting is when kids are little... Have you ever gone on a walk with a 6-year-old? It's impossible. A walk that should take 10 minutes takes an hour, because every worm and every flower and every house and every dog... I mean, they just have this imagination. I don't know what happens to us as adults, but our imagination goes away and is replaced basically, usually, by dark fantasy.

Freud said the two things we fantasize about the most are sex and anger because we don't know what to do with them, so they show up in our fantasy life. You'll fantasize about revenge. Right? Not necessarily physical revenge but what you would say to your ex if you could go back.

A lot of people fantasize about escaping. "What would my life be like if I had a different job or a different spouse or a different house or lived in a different city?" People fantasize sexually, of course. People fantasize about success. "What if I got the promotion and if I got the money?"

This is an interesting thought. What would it look like if you began to discipline your daydreams? This is a great question: "What would it look like if Christ really got ahold of my life and my family?" If we could dream the dream of a Christian family... Let's just dream for a second. What could our family be like?

If we wanted to take a moment and just dream about what a Christian marriage could look like... Partly what I want to do is give you permission to dream and realize you're

going to have some type of fantasy. The question is...*Where is your fantasy life going to go?*

Third is *intake*. You know this, but if I saw your... We'd probably all be embarrassed if any of us saw this. But if I just saw your YouTube history...not your Internet history, just your YouTube history...your Spotify Wrapped, and your Netflix queue, I could probably tell you what you're thinking about.

If you are a single lady and are constantly watching *The Bachelor* and other shows like that... I'm not saying it's a sin to watch that show. Maybe it is. I don't know. The point is...*Is that really helping?* If you're insecure with how you look, men or women, I could almost guarantee you're looking at a lot of people on Instagram with their filtered pictures of... All they do for a living is work out.

This is why I can't go on Zillow, because I just look at all of these... I like my house until I go on Zillow and look at all of the houses I can't afford. It's not good for my heart. Guys, garbage in is garbage out. It's true. You are what you eat physically, and you are what you eat spiritually.

The fourth one is *memory*. I'm just giving us different dimensions of the mind. There's attention (that's the beginning of the mind). There's imagination (that's the dreaming of the mind). There's the intake (that's the food of the mind). *Memory* is how you look back. If you think about every spiritual battle you've lost, most times... If you've been in our church or any good church for a year or two, you have enough information to fight all of your spiritual battles.

The last spiritual battle you lost, it was not about information you didn't have; it was about information you forgot. You have a choice on how you're going to think about your past. You can have a marriage where you focus on everything bad your spouse has ever done (people do that) or you can have a marriage where you focus on all of the great memories you've had together.

The battle for the Israelites through the Old Testament was "How am I going to interpret my past experience in Egypt?" You know that? Sometimes they thought, "Man, I really miss Egypt." Other times, they had to be reminded, "You were a slave back then." Some of you are thinking back to some time in your life where you indulged in some type of sin, and you're missing it. That's the wrong type of memory to be thinking of.

Paul says we have to set our minds on it. Now, look at what he says about the non-Christian. Verse 7: "***For the mind that is set on the flesh...***" This is the opposite of the mind on the Spirit. "***...is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.***"

Now, it's interesting. It's giving us a look into the non-Christian mind. You know your nice neighbor? We all probably have a nice neighbor near our house. Or your nice coworker who doesn't believe, but you go, "Man, but they are just so nice." They are hostile to God in their mind.

Now, I don't recommend telling them that. Here's what it means. Think about it. When are you hostile? If you were like, "When would I be hostile?" When is a person hostile? You're only hostile when you think someone is your enemy and someone is going to invade you. The non-Christian looks at God not as a giver but as a taker. "If I let God into my life, he's going to just take from me, so I'm hostile toward him."

Now, let me show you what it looks like. The hostile mind in 2026 in America is not the angry atheist. You could go days or weeks or months or years, depending on the context you're in, and you might never meet an angry atheist. There just aren't that many. I've always found the angry atheists interesting, because they're angry at the God they don't believe in. It's always strange.

Here's what hostility looks like in the modern mind. It looks like polite indifference. "I'm so glad that works for you." We all know the opposite of love is not hate; the opposite of love is indifference. Another way the modern mind is hostile to God is it says... It does it in sophisticated ways. It creates a god to replace the God of the Bible.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I like to think of God as..."? That is one of the most arrogant statements a person could make. "Here's how I'd like to..." Who are *you*? "I'd like to think of God as..." By the way, it's always a bigger, smarter version of them that basically agrees with them.

The third way... This is the one that shows up to church. Does the hostile mind come to church? Yes, in religious performance. It basically says, "God, I will do a bunch of good things for you and get in a Community Group, give some money, show up to church," or whatever it is. "But I'm doing this so that you owe me, God." You don't see that that person is hostile to God until they don't get what they want, and then they're hostile to God.

So, Paul says there are two mindsets. There's the mindset on the Spirit. There's the mindset on the flesh. Then he says, "But I have something even deeper to tell you about the Holy Spirit." Let me show you this. This is verse 9, where we'll spend the rest of our time. He says, "**You, however, are not in the flesh...**" He wants to encourage you. "**...but in the Spirit, if in fact...**"

Now, this has to be a shock when they hear this for the first time. "**...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." This is where we're going to spend the rest of our time.

Here's the big idea for the last part of the sermon: Jesus lived *for* you; the Spirit lives *in* you. Jesus lived *for* you. We talk about that a lot. We don't talk a lot about how the Spirit lives *in* you. Partly, we don't know what to do with the person of the Holy Spirit.

When Jon Tyson was here last year at the Heights, I had him stay and do a Q&A with our staff. If you know Jon Tyson, he would be very charismatic. By that, I just mean wanting to be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led and believing the things the Holy Spirit did in the book of Acts he's doing today.

We were asking him some questions about being a Spirit-led, Spirit-filled church, and I used a one-liner that I got from somebody else. I actually thought it was pretty clever. I said, "Yeah, we're charismatic with a seat belt." He rebuked me. (I won't try to do his beautiful Australian accent.) In front of all the staff, he said, "How about being charismatic with a Bible?" *Whoo!* So now I'm using *that* one-liner instead. "Charismatic with a Bible."

I want to talk about how the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Too often, we talk about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but we never talk about having a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. It says that the Holy Spirit lives *in* you. Now, this means the Holy Spirit makes his permanent dwelling place in each individual Christian and that he will never leave you and never forsake you.

It's interesting. I have two illustrations to talk about how the Holy Spirit *in* you transforms you. Probably the best illustration of this in general is marriage. This also could work with a roommate or anything, but I think marriage is a great illustration. Maybe you guys go to a new house or, when they get married, the wife moves in with the husband or the husband moves in with the wife. As soon as somebody lives with you, it changes everything about you.

I think I've told you guys this before. I became more self-aware as soon as I started to date Margy, because I would call her, we would talk on the phone, and then I would hang up. She'd say, "You never said goodbye." I guess in my household we just never said goodbye. Just like, "All right. Well..." I don't even know how I did it. Now I know to say goodbye. "Talk to you later. Have a good night." I just didn't do that. I'm from Pittsburgh. Just, "Sounds good," you know.

I didn't realize, when I brush my teeth... Most people, I guess, just move their hand. I move my head for double power. I'm working on it. Okay? When somebody moves in, it changes you. Okay. Here's another, probably even better illustration. When a woman

gets pregnant with a child, all of a sudden there is somebody inside of her. In a very real sense...

Someone told me a long time ago, "As soon as your wife..." This is true for anybody. "As soon as your wife becomes a mom, she is never the same person again." Even before the woman may know she's pregnant, all of a sudden she's like, "Why do I all of a sudden want pickles?" Right? I mean, it changes everything about you. When the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in you, it changes you.

Now, here's what I want you to know. There has been different teaching on this. I want you to know what the Bible says. The Bible says the moment you become a Christian, you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, which just means you're immersed in the Holy Spirit. Here's what this means. Every Christian in here has the Holy Spirit. There are no JV Christians.

A simple way to think about it is the Bible teaches that there is one *baptism* in the Holy Spirit (that comes at conversion), but there are many *fillings* of the Holy Spirit. You might go, "Kyle, what is it like?" Because you might go, "Have I ever...?" You might think this to yourself. "Kyle, you're talking about being filled with the Holy Spirit, and I'm not really familiar with that kind of stuff. What does that feel like?"

Well, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who I told you preached 23 sermons... I think he gave the best illustration of this ever. If you've not heard this, I just love this. Here's what it's like to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said imagine a young son, say, 6, 7, or 8 years old, is walking with his dad, and his dad is holding his hand. The son knows the father loves him, and the father knows he loves the son.

In the middle of the walk, the father (because dads do this sometimes) feels overwhelmed with love and picks his son up, gives him a big bear hug, kisses him, and says, "I just wanted to let you know I love you. I'm so proud that you're my son." Then he puts his son back down. Here's the interesting thing about that: Was the son more loved before or after the father picked him up? It was the same amount of love. It was the *experience* of the love of the father for the child that was changed.

In just a minute, we're going to end our service, and I want to invite you guys to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's not something to be afraid of. Again and again in the book of Acts... You can go read the book of Acts. It says they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

By the way, people always go, "Man, what would I do if I was filled with the Holy Spirit?" Well, I can tell you what they do every time they're filled with the Holy Spirit. It's the same thing. They speak God's Word boldly. That's exactly what they do every time. They're scared. They're suffering. They're told to be quiet. The government is after them.

They go, they pray, and they're filled with the Holy Spirit. Next thing, they're preaching the Word boldly.

Guys, I think some of you are on spiritual "Empty." If you were to look at your spiritual dashboard, your tank would be on empty. You're on fumes, and I want to invite you in just a minute to come forward. Grab your wife's hand. Grab your kid's hand. Just say, "Guys, we want to be a family that's filled with the Holy Spirit."

Here's the other thing. The Bible says there are two things you can do to the Holy Spirit who lives inside you. This makes people feel uncomfortable because it makes God sound weak. He's not weak, but I just have to use the language of the New Testament.

The Bible says you can *grieve* the Holy Spirit or *quench* him. It's interesting. Why would there be two things? Because you grieve the Holy Spirit by doing things you know he doesn't want you to do, and you quench the Holy Spirit by suppressing the promptings of the good things he's telling you to do.

About two weeks ago, I had an opportunity. I was in a small room. There were about 50 pastors and (some of you will know this name) Pastor Joby Martin was speaking to us. He has become this well-known guy. He's very well connected. He said one of the questions people asked was, "Well, what do you do with all of these big people who have these moral failures?"

He said everybody who has a moral failure, the same thing happens to them every time. He said every Christian who's had a moral failure, here's what happens. They're going in a direction, and the Holy Spirit taps them on the shoulder and says, "I don't want you to do that," and somewhere along the way, they go, "I got this. It's okay." That's how every person ends up down the wrong path.

So, if you're here today and you know, "There's an area of my life... I can't be filled with the Holy Spirit if I'm grieving him..." Some of you need to come forward. For others of you, there's a prompting. There is something the Holy Spirit has been asking you to do. It might be to share the gospel. It might be to pray for someone. It might be to confess a sin. It might be to go with a church plant. Who knows what it is. I just want to encourage you to not quench the Holy Spirit.

We want to be a church that is Spirit-filled and Spirit-led, because here's the great promise. Let me read you verse 11. This is how Paul ends. I can't think of a more powerful statement to end this section. I don't know that there's a more powerful thing said about the Holy Spirit in the entire Bible than this. ***"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."***

What he's saying is the same Spirit who showed up to a tomb outside Jerusalem 2,000 years ago and made the Son of God's heart beat again and rose him from the dead...that same Spirit lives in you. Do not quench him, do not grieve him, but be filled with him. Let's pray.

Lord, across this room, across all of our campuses, I want to call us forward. One thing the Bible teaches, Lord, is you like to be asked. Sometimes we say, "Well, why doesn't God just fill me with the Holy Spirit?" He likes to be asked. The Holy Spirit is sensitive. The language here is of grief, literally of being wounded.

Lord, would you grow our church and each person here across all of our campuses in having a personal relationship...yes, with Jesus Christ, but with the Holy Spirit. Would we come forward in just a minute to say, "I'm not going to grieve the Holy Spirit anymore, or when I know I'm grieving the Holy Spirit, I'm going to turn from my sin."

Lord, would we be soft to the promptings and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, that when we hear him say, "Go in this direction, say this word, say this encouragement," when we hear the word of God, we would not quench it; we would not suppress the promptings, Lord, but would obey. Lord, would you fill us with the Holy Spirit so that we can live our lives the way Jesus Christ lived his? We ask this in his name, amen.