

Sermon Series: Do Over: Experience New Life in Christ
To be used with: Session Six: A Life You Can't Live On Your Own
Sermon Title Possibilities:
 Life in the Spirit and With the Spirit

Scripture: Romans 8:8-17, 26-27

Connection to Unit Theme: *Do Over: Experience New Life in Christ* is a six session study from the book of Romans. These text-based sermon outlines will cover the same Scripture passages and topics as are being studied in the small groups, but with a different perspective. This will allow you as the pastor to reinforce what small group leaders are talking about, without “stealing their thunder.” Session 6 is called “A Life You Can’t Live on Your Own.” The Point of the session is “God’s Holy Spirit lives in you and empowers you.”

Introduction

Illustration

On June 25, 1981, Eugene Lang returned to the Harlem elementary school he had attended 53 years earlier. Lang was a successful businessman by that time, a man worth millions, but the neighborhood he'd grown up in had changed drastically. East Harlem's children were poor, and the drop-out rate for the community schools were among the highest in the nation. As Lang made the standard, graduation-day speech about working hard, studying, and going to college, he noticed that hardly anyone was paying attention. So that's when he changed his speech.

"This is your first graduation - just the perfect time to dream," he says. "Dream of what you want to be, the kind of life you wish to build. And believe in that dream. Be prepared to work for it. Always remember, each dream is important because it is your dream, it is your future. And it is worth working for."

"You must study," he continues. "You must learn. You must attend junior high school, high school, and then college." The words are empty, no one really believing that these kids will make it. The statistics, the history, argues against his speech. But he continues. "Stay in school and I'll ..." The speaker pauses, and then, as if suddenly inspired, he blurts out: "I will give each of you a college scholarship."

After a second of silence, a wave of emotional cheering and applause and excited conversation rolled over the room. It was the start of an amazing movement that has seen more than 12,000 students attend college with the help of more than 200 additional, generous sponsors.

In that first year of the promise, however, Lang did more than guarantee the money for 61 fidgety sixth-graders. He helped school administrators prepare the students for college, even hiring tutors for the students, giving them the very best chance at making their way to - and through - college.

Those sixth graders and their families realized what a difference it makes when someone bigger than yourself, with more resources at his disposal than you could ever imagine, comes alongside you, cheering you on, encouraging you, and speaking on your behalf.

Did you know that according to Romans 8, followers of Christ have access to an Advocate immeasurably richer than even the most successful business tycoon? His name is the Holy Spirit. And He lives in us and empowers us. Let's see what Paul has to say about Him.

(Read Romans 8:8-17)

I. The Spirit of Power (v. 8-11)

The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of YOU who are Christians. Imagine the amount of energy that would be required to raise someone from the dead. That power is inside you.

There isn't a nuclear power plant on face of the earth could hope to create that much power

Now, that wasn't always how God did things. In the Old Testament it appears that God rarely placed His Spirit INSIDE of people. Bezalel (Exodus 35:30ff) the architect of the Tabernacle was one of these. But ordinarily, when God imparted His Spirit to the Old Testament saints, the Scriptures speak of the Spirit coming UPON them. And it seemed to be for a set period of time, to accomplish a specific purpose.

- Judges 6:34: "...the Spirit of the LORD came UPON Gideon, and he blew a trumpet... and summoned Israel together to challenge the Midianites"
- Judges 14:6: "...The Spirit of the LORD came UPON (Samson) in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat..." Judges 14:6
- 1 Samuel 16:13: "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed (David) in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came UPON David in power..."

However, all that changed when Jesus came.

- In John 14:16-17 Jesus promised "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be IN you."
- John 7:38-39 tells us that Jesus declared "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

You see, in the Old Testament God's Spirit only came upon certain select individuals. Judges, Prophets, Kings and such. But in the New Testament God's Spirit was to be INSIDE each and every Christian (1 Cor. 3:16).

Like the power core in Iron Man – the Spirit of God is always inside the Christian. He's always there to give us His power. His energy.

II. The Spirit of Adoption (v. 14-17)

1. All who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. (v. 14)

- John 1:12 says that you are a child of God. He calls you “son” or “daughter” and no court can ever take that away from you. I love Isaiah 43:1: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.” As one of God’s children, you are His. And Isaiah 49:16 says that God has engraved you on the palm of his hand. 2 Corinthians 6:18: “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” If you wonder how God feels about you and what kind of name he calls you, check out 1 John 3:1: “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

2. *We have freedom, not fear (v. 15).* If you are a child of God there is nothing to fear because the Holy Spirit is with you and in you. Hebrews 2:15 says that you and I no longer have to fear death: “And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” In the place of fear God has given us freedom as 2 Timothy 1:7 says: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (KJV).

3. *We enjoy an intimate relationship with the Father (v.15).* “...But you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, out ‘Abba, Father. The word “cry” means to “call aloud, to shriek.” We have the amazing privilege of calling the awesome, majestic, all-powerful God of the universe “Abba,” which is an untranslated Aramaic word that means “daddy.” This term of endearment speaks of an intimate relationship and was used by Jesus when He cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane in Mark 14:36: “‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’” This is a good model for us in that we approach our “Daddy God” with confidence and yet we commit to do His will, whatever that might be.

4. *The Holy Spirit assures us of this relationship (v. 16).* This shows us that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not an inanimate object or power or some “Star Wars” kind of force. Barclay points out that this reference to the Spirit testifying builds on a picture from how adoptions worked in Roman culture. When an adoption was finalized, the ceremony was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses who would testify as to the legitimacy of the adoption, thus guaranteeing that the one adopted had full rights as a child.

5. *We are heirs of God—coheirs with Jesus Christ (v. 17).* Did you hear that Oprah Winfrey made \$260 million last year? That’s nothing compared to Bill Gates, the richest man in the world. Wouldn’t you like to be named in their wills? Friends, believers in Jesus Christ have something even better.

- Ephesians 1:8: “I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.”
- 1 Peter 1:4 says that this inheritance is guaranteed: “And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you.”
- Don’t miss the last part of verse 17: “...seeing that we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” We are heirs of God but the full benefits of this will not be poured out on us until eternity. Our present grief prepares us for future glory. In the meantime, we will share in the sufferings of the Savior. Since Jesus suffered, we should be prepared to suffer ourselves.

Suffering doesn't necessarily mean that something is the matter; rather it is a mark of our sonship (See also Philippians 1:29 and Acts 14:22).

III. The Spirit of Intercession (v. 26-27)

In Romans 8:26 says "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings"

Have you ever felt like God wasn't hearing your prayers? Like you could pray and pray and pray and you just weren't getting through? We all have. But Romans 8 says that even when we don't know how to pray or what to pray for, God's Holy Spirit is praying on our behalf. And that He always prays in accordance with God's will. You don't even have to say anything. God's Spirit is so in tune with your spirit that God senses your every emotion as you feel them. He knows your joys and your sorrows even when you have trouble putting those emotions into words. God understands everything you feel, because God's Spirit is right there inside you.

How does the Holy Spirit help us in prayer?

1. Reminds us what to pray. (John 14:26).
2. Motivates us when to pray. (John 14:17).
3. Guides us in prayer. (John 16:13).
4. Will point us to Jesus. (John 15:26).
5. Gives us strength to pray. (Col. 1:8-12).

Conclusion

Illustration

A little boy and his father visited the country store. Upon leaving the store the owner of the store offered the little boy some free candy. "Get a handful of candy", the merchant said to the boy. The boy looked at his father and said "You do it, Daddy." The owner "Son, you can reach the jar. Just grab a handful of candy. My treat." Again the boy looked at his father and said, "You do it, Daddy." Finally, the father reached into the candy jar and got a handful of candy and gave it to his son. As they walked home, the father stopped and asked his son why he did not grab a handful of the free candy. The boy, with a big smile on his face, looked into the face of his father and said, "Because I know that your hand is bigger than mine."

The Holy Spirit is more powerful than we are. He adopts us into a family that is immeasurably richer than ours is. And His prayers on our behalf are more effective than ours could ever be on our own. Today, put your life in His hands, because His hands are so much bigger than yours.

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