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Series: The Holy Spirit

THE SPIRIT'S PART IN OUR SPIRITUAL VICTORY (Romans 8)

Please turn to Romans 8.

According to *The Washington Post* newspaper, just a little over a year ago, on December 10, 2017, “It took everything Chandler Self had — and then some — to win the Dallas Marathon ... Self began collapsing over the final half-mile and it took a warm gesture of sportsmanship from a fellow runner for her to cross the finish line ... Ariana Luterman, a high school runner at Green Hill Academy, help[ed] Self to her feet several times over the final 200 yards. As the two approached the finish line, Self fell again and lunged to fall across it. Marathon personnel immediately came to help her and take her away in a wheelchair ... Luterman said the following: **“The only thing I could think of to do was to pick her up, so I picked her up and I think she was a little confused at first ... No way was I going to start sprinting and just leave her there. ... You saw, those last 20 meters, she was just down and I was so worried she wasn’t going to make it. So I picked her up with all my might. Right when we got to the finish line, I just kind of pushed her in front of me so she would be the one to cross that line.”**

Without Ariana Luterman, Chandler Self would never have won the Dallas Marathon in December of 2017. Medical officials would have rushed to her side, two football fields shy of the finish line, and Self would have been taken out of the race, which, for her, would have been a horrible defeat in light of the fact that she was so close to a victorious, first-place finish.

This morning, I would like to speak to you on the subject of “The Spirit’s Part in Our Spiritual Victory.” Victory for Chandler Self would have been impossible apart from Adriana Luterman. In the same way, apart from the strength and power the Holy Spirit brings to you and I as children of God, spiritual victory would be impossible. And so, this morning, we are going to study how and why this is so. **The Spirit’s part** in our spiritual victory.

(Prayer)

English poet and literary critic **Samuel Coleridge said Paul’s letter** to the Romans is “The most profound work in existence.” And famous theologian **John Calvin said of it:** “When anyone understands this Epistle, he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scripture.”

Before we specifically look at the Spirit’s part in our spiritual victory in Romans 8, let’s take a moment to get an idea of what Paul has been saying earlier in the letter.

In the early chapters of Romans, Paul shares God’s solution to mankind’s problem (our sinfulness)—salvation by faith alone in Christ alone:

Romans 3:21–22a-----²¹ But now **the righteousness of God** apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even **the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ**, to all and on all who believe.

Romans 4:5-----⁵ But to him who does not work but believes on Him **who justifies the ungodly, his faith** is accounted for **righteousness**,

Romans 5:1-----¹ Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ...

Romans 3:21-5:11 is the justification section of the book of Romans. This section tells us that **unrighteous people can obtain God’s righteousness through Christ**. But God is not just interested in having spiritual babies (as great as it is to have a baby). Good parents want their children to grow up, become mature, and make significant contributions to society as well as God’s eternal kingdom. And as a “good, good Father,” God is no different.

So, starting in **Romans 5:12** and going all the way through the end of chapter 8 (8:39), Paul writes concerning spiritual victory.

In fact, the passage that connects these two sections, 5:9–11, illustrates justification and sanctification beautifully:

Romans 5:9–11-----⁹ **Much more then**, having now **been justified** by His blood [justification], we **shall be saved** from wrath through Him [sanctification]. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ **And not only that**, but we also rejoice [Greek: will be rejoicing] in God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Justification	Sanctification
(3:21-5:11)	(5:12-8:39)
Unrighteous people can obtain God’s righteousness through the Lord Jesus Christ	Those who have obtained God’s righteousness can live victoriously through the Holy Spirit
5:9---“having been justified”	5:9---“we shall be saved”
5:10---“having been reconciled” (through the death of His Son)	5:10---“we shall be saved” (by His life)

Now, this morning, we will be focusing on the right side of that table (the work of the Spirit in setting us free from sin and making us holy—in other words, sanctification).

It is very interesting that as you read the book of Romans, **the Holy Spirit is** referred to 4X in Romans 1-7, **but 19X in chapter 8!!!!!!** That is so important to see.

Just as Chandler Self could not obtain victory apart from Ariana Luteran, you and I cannot obtain victory apart from the Spirit of God.

We see this over and over again in Romans. Romans 7:6 speaks of serving God...

Romans 7:6-----in the **newness of the Spirit** and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

In Romans 8:2...

Romans 8:2-----...the law of **the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has made me [Paul] free from the law of sin and death.

Even the Apostle Paul knew, as a believer, spiritual defeat. But he eventually learned how to be victorious by the power of the Holy Spirit, and he could THEN say the Spirit has made **ME** free!!!!

One more verse as an example of how Romans connects victory over sin with the work of the Holy Spirit:

Romans 8:13-----For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if **by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, **you will live**.

In ***Leadership*** Magazine, Don Lyon wrote:

“If you have the Spirit without the Word, you blow up. **[make a mess of things]** If you have the Word without the Spirit, you dry up. If you have both the Word and the Spirit, you grow up.

And overcoming sin and growing into the likeness of Christ is impossible apart from the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

Counseling guru Gary Oliver put it this way:

If a farmer doesn't plant seeds, he will never harvest a crop. It doesn't matter how weed-free his ground is; he must also plant and cultivate good seed. In the same way, we can only reap a harvest of purity and integrity by planting the good seed of God's Word into our lives.

NOW NOTICE WHAT HE SAYS HERE:

I'm not talking about merely reading the Bible. I'm talking about allowing the Holy Spirit to plant the truths of Scripture deep into our hearts and minds through consistent Bible reading and memorization, meditation and prayer. To be effective, and to remain pure, truth must be planted in our hearts daily.

I wish we had the time to study every verse in Romans 6, 7, & 8. But for our purposes today, I want us to consider two verses that are crucial to our discussion.

Romans 8:5 gives two options every believer has:

Romans 8:5-----⁵ 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, the things of the Spirit.

As believers, we can...

1. **Behave on** the basis of our bodily impulses (“according to the flesh”) with a worldly mindset (minds focused “on the things of the flesh”)

Or, we can...

2. **Behave on** the basis of the Spirit’s impulses (“according to the Spirit”) with a heavenly mindset (minds focused on “the things of the Spirit”)

#1 results in being a slave to sin and a life full of miserable problems due to the punishing effects of sin. **#2 results in victory** over sin and a life characterized by vitality and peace. Notice verse 13:

Romans 8:13-----¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will **die**; but if **by the Spirit** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will **live**.

This doesn’t happen overnight. This is a process. Just as a child is prepared for living as an adult over the course of 18 years, our focus on the Word of God (WITH THE SPIRIT’S HELP) changes our outlook, and thus, our behavior, over time. And the more a believer cooperates with the Spirit of God and the Word of God, the sooner freedom from sin and victory over sin can occur.

Closing illustration RE: our need of the Spirit’s assistance in all of this. (Have teenager come and sit in chair. I attempt to lift chair over my head in my own strength. (Not possible.) Ask adult to assist me. No problem.)

What was **IMPOSSIBLE** for me to do, no matter how hard I tried became **POSSIBLE** through another’s assistance.

(Closing comments and **APPLICATION**)