

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT:
4. ***“The Divine Provision: The Benefits Package”***
Romans 6:5 – 13

Introduction:

This series of messages is about living in the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, as God’s redeemed sons and daughters. The Almighty God has planned and purposed in His heart **to Know each one of us Intimately, as His sons and daughters, by His Holy Spirit living in our lives**. He has been working at this desire in His heart to know us and walk through life with us for thousands of years.

This is the wonder before us: The Lord God Almighty desires to partner with you and me, as we live our lives here on earth each day. He desires to give us the incredibly wonderful privilege of living in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, to walk with Him and talk with Him each new day. **There are people we love dearly and live among who will never open a Bible, but they can see the Spirit of Jesus at work in our hearts and lives because they see Him transform us!**

A second factor has to be understood in the light of this deep longing and desire in God’s heart: Satan is God’s mortal enemy, who absolutely hates God and everything and everyone God loves. Satan and his kingdom beings violently oppose God’s Spirit living in us, transforming us, and using us as vehicles of God’s **Grace** for God’s **Glory**. The reason should be obvious, but let’s state it. If we are glorifying God on the earth, the enemy loses power!

This series of messages is about Walking through life In Step with the Holy Spirit. It is built on asking and answering well this powerful question about the Christian life: How does one become like God? How does one qualify for sonship and daughterhood to God? How does one become Christ-like in the way he/she lives their life on earth? There are two separate and distinct methods people take in terms of living a godly life:

On the one hand there is God’s eternal purpose to have fellowship with people by His Holy Spirit’s presence living in our hearts, and through this gift of fellowship with us, to create sons and daughters of God who walk through life with Him by faith. As we walk with God we take on more and more of His characteristics, we are given the enormous blessing of His heart and nature living in us!

On the other hand there are those who have bought into our enemy Satan’s agenda for people. Satan has gone on record as stating he will make himself like the Most High God. Satan’s desire for human lives is to steal the glory of God, destroy humankind’s ability to walk with God, and to think we can make ourselves like God by our best efforts too. Satan’s agenda is to put human beings in bondage to our own efforts at being godly, working hard to make ourselves like God, to live a Christ like life, which ends up in utter futility.

As we think about living in the Holy Spirit every day, we've noted a very important Biblical truth that all of us sooner or later bump into: the **Built-In Proneness to Failure**. Try as hard as we might to make ourselves like God, to live a Christ-like life, all of us know what it feels like to have failed the Lord, that we have sinned by doing that which we knew grieved His heart.

If we take seriously God's **Desires** for our lives, His **Commands** for our actions, and His **Promises** to us in Scripture, sooner or later we will see that our ability to be Christ-like in and of ourselves is insufficient and there can be temptation to inner despair. We invariably come to see that increased knowledge, skill, and maturity have not cleansed us of inner attitudes we don't like, nor cured us of selfishness we see in our lives, nor kept us from desires that are not in keeping with the Spirit's desires.

The reason this is true is that the Bible teaches us that the cause of this inner leaning to the wrong lies farther back than behaviors and attitudes and actions. **The Cause lays in the individual Heart of each person**, in the inherited sinful nature, the fleshly nature, sinful leanings and desires and affections that have yet to be addressed.

Romans 7:14 – 20 *“We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”*

I. The Presence of the Sinful Nature:

The Bible says we have a heart problem: **The presence of a Sinful Nature living in us** because we are human beings. It is the inherited bent to sin living in all of us, which must be faced and dealt with by the provisions of Jesus. There are three different Biblical terms which get at this inner disposition or inclination to sin:

An Evil Heart – Jeremiah wrote to God's people regarding the inclinations of our hearts in 17:9, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”* That is a pretty dismal picture isn't it? But Jesus doesn't give us much relief in His teaching. Mark 7:20 – 23 *“He went on: ‘What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance, and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”*

The Carnal or Sinful Mind – by which is meant, not the intellect or the ability to think well, but the inclination, tendency, and disposition. Paul writes in Romans 8:7 *“the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”* Notice how Paul writing under the direction of the Holy Spirit talks about a part of our tendencies in thought to be actually antagonistic to surrendering deeply to God. *“It is hostile to God.”* He is not talking about evil actions but the selfishness behind actions.

The Law of Sin is another way Paul describes this inner propensity to the wrong. It is another way of saying that humans have an inward “bent to sin,” which prompts actions. It isn’t a law as in a statute or ordinance but a law like gravity that is universally true of human beings apart from the power of God to set us free. Romans 7:23 *“but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”*

What the Bible teaches us is that when we come to know Christ as Savior and Lord we are washed of personal guilt, of sin, and transgressions. But being born of heaven does not deal a deathblow to the inner nature we all inherited from our humanity, the evil heart, the carnal mind, and the law of sin. We are given a new nature in Christ without the removal of the old one!

We are brought into a deep sense of inner conflict, because we see two competing spiritual natures in our lives: The sinful nature and the Spirit’s nature. We see in our hearts and souls the bent to run everything through the grid of self and its interests. The very essence of this indwelling sin issue is a fundamental bent toward **Self-Authority** or **Self-Sovereignty**.

II. Crucifixion of the Sinful Nature:

One of the deep and profound truths of Scripture is that we cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit of God without dealing deeply with our bent to sin, our sinful nature’s activities and desires. The truth is that we are all brought face to face with an inward reality we cannot escape. **There cannot be Two Lords in my life.** If I am ruling my life the Holy Spirit is not ruling me!

And there is a companion truth to this one as well: **Self-sovereignty really doesn’t Work** when we examine our selves and our decisions honestly. Our lordship of our own lives does not lead us to the freedom we promise ourselves that we will have does it? When we make the choice to be our own lord, we invariably run up against a heart bent or a mindset that struggles to surrender to God, and the decisions we make to express our self-sovereignty, our self-interest invariably hurt those we love the most in life.

The sinful nature doesn’t obey even our very best efforts at containing it. It cannot be bargained with, disciplined, or taught – **It must be dealt with more decisively: It must be Put to Death in the crucifixion of Christ Jesus!**

The sinful nature despises the way of the cross. It will not like the way of the cross of Jesus, and will kick and fuss and stir up all manner of reasons in our heart and mind why we shouldn’t do this. The flesh will scream at us from either end of the spectrum, **“This is a totally Unnecessary thing to do or give us reasons why it will ultimately prove to be Insufficient to deal with inner sinful tendencies!”**

Romans 6:6 – 10 *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer*

has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.”

Galatians 5:24, 25 *“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

The propensity or inner leaning to sin and the self must be put to death with Christ Jesus as an act of faith by my will if I am to have **the inner Experience of having the Spirit of the Lord God Enthroned in my Heart**. When the Holy Spirit is enthroned in my heart He will do three things in my heart where sinful leanings once stood in control of me:

a.) **Purify my Heart**, which is where sin dwells. It is in the heart that we are double-minded, serving sin and yet wanting to serve the Lord of glory. Purifying my heart denotes a sense of God’s healing, mending what is broken in my heart, and making me whole within.

b.) **Cleanse my Heart** denotes a purging my heart of sin and sin’s power to rule me, making it possible for me to serve the Lord with gladness and not to serve my sinful leanings. There is a deep sense in which the Lord makes me wholly His, He sets me apart for His use as I surrender to His work in my heart.

c.) **Free my Heart** from the “law of sin.” God’s plan is to emancipate me from the inner tendencies to sin and sinful desires, which has been the cause of my inner defeat over and over. What doing good deeds or law keeping could not do, the Spirit of God does in me as I surrender to His work within.

III. The Benefits of Self-Crucifixion:

One thing that really bothers me about this topic of the self-crucified life is the focus on what all we are asked to give up, to surrender to God, and it seems that the focus on that part of this tends to make this a real drag to engage in. But the experience of taking the sinful nature to the cross of Jesus and putting it to death there, the surrender of our hearts to Jesus’ life and Lordship leads us to tremendous benefits. That is the focus of this message today. Let’s engage in this for the benefits package!

Benefit #1 – We May be Being Filled with the Spirit of Jesus. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be baptized in the Spirit, submerged in the Spirit. The simple truth is that there is no possibility of walking through life filled with the Holy Spirit until and unless we choose to put the sinful, selfish nature to death with Jesus at the cross. We cannot be a slave to sin and a servant of Jesus Christ in this world and do that well! We cannot be full of self and full of the Holy Spirit at the same time. They are mutually exclusive persons!

Romans 8:9b *“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit our lives are in Christ Jesus and His life is living in us – John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, He abides in us as we abide in Him – John 15:4, 5
“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit buy itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Benefit #2 – We begin to see the Image of Jesus living in our lives more clearly. The renewed person, whose desire is to be after the heart and image of Jesus, learns to explore the depths of:

1. What Christ has done for me, what He suffered for me to set me free from sin, and why this is something that is central to my living for the rest of my life. The Son of God took away my sins, washed me and cleansed me, and now lives in me by His indwelling Spirit granting me victory over sin, pressing His eternal victory into my life.
2. The claim Jesus now has on my gratitude because of what He has done for me, which I was powerless to do anything about on my own. I am forever grateful, so deeply indebted to Him for the deliverance I have received by faith.
3. What it means to walk through life by faith in the Son of God, that His life is living in me and my life is lived in Him. The presence and power of Jesus are poured out into me by His Spirit. The truth is that I am a citizen of a brand new kingdom, that I am being fitted for heaven but living on earth, with new values and longings of the heart.

Benefit #3 – We are Enabled to Experience Resurrection Power to live Above Sin’s Allure and Power to enslave us!

Romans 6:11 – 13 *“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

1. In our **Affections and Desires** we will see new desires emerging, that we will actually desire to do what we know the Lord Jesus delights in as the two of us walk through our daily life together. The closer we get to Him and the more we know Him the more repulsive sin is to us!
2. In our **Mind**, in how we now **Think** so **Differently** than we used to think. How we think about the Lord God, people in general, our loved ones in particular, and how we interact with the world system we live in, all are impacted by the mind of Christ Jesus as He lives in us by His Spirit. One of the things that we think about first is how we may honor and glorify the Lord in our lives.

Benefit #4 – We are enabled to truly Live a Life of Love toward God.

Mark 12:29, 30 *“The most important one, answered Jesus, ‘is this; Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’”*

Self-crucifixion leads us to be Enabled to Truly Love God. When self is at the center of life, even loving God can be tainted with selfish motivations in our hearts. We can love God, honor God, and serve God for what we get out of it; escape from hell, living a more moral life, or going to heaven, and not for the pure motive of simply honoring and loving God for who He is.

The love Jesus speaks of here is holy, self-emptying love, the kind of love that is more concerned with the object of its affections than it is concerned about self. Have you noticed how we are taught by our culture to love? We are taught to love from the outside in. We begin with doing things for people, thinking well of them, choosing to be nice, but rarely get to heart desires to love them. Now notice how Jesus tells us true love for God emerges. It emanates from the inside outward – **Heart**, with all my will, **Soul**, with all my affections and allegiance, **Mind**, with all my mental powers, and **Strength**, with all my energies.

Benefit #5 – We are enabled to Live a Life of Love toward People.

Mark 12:31 *“The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Self-crucifixion enables us to Genuinely Love other people and care about their Well-Being. The second great commandment has a clearly outlined progression about how we can measure the love that is required of us and that is to be given to all of the people in our sphere of influence: **As We Love Ourselves.**

If self-interest exists in us unchallenged, our self-love will be completely out of kilter. We may want to express unselfish love to others but invariably what we do will point back to ourselves as the center of the universe. Or a desire for purity might be evidence of self-love – in our wanting God to make us a showcase example, desiring to sit on the right hand of God. Even the desire to be significant, rather than the desire to do significant things, can be a form of fleshy self-love.

Francois Fenelon says, "Do not listen to the voice that suggests you live for yourself. The voice of self-love is even more powerful than the voice of the serpent." Again, "Self-love brings great inner anxiety." Or, "You will be tempted to speak out in a humble tone of voice to tell others of your problems. Watch out for this. A humility that is still talkative does not run very deep. When you talk too much, your self-love relieves his sense of shame a little."

Fenelon goes on to say, "Self-love is proud of its spiritual accomplishments. While on the outside you seem to be only concerned with the glory of God, the unconquered self-nature deep within is causing you trouble. I am sure that you want God to be glorified, but you want his glory to be expressed through the testimony that he has made you perfect. Let me tell you that this feeds self-love. It is simply a covetous guise of the self nature."

How does the person who is living a self-crucified life love himself? We respect ourselves; we provide for ourselves, we care about the welfare of our souls, and seek to insure that we are walking with Jesus in the Spirit each new day.

Regarding Jesus' words: "*Love your neighbor as yourself,*" wouldn't that be an excellent starting point for the expression of genuine love to the people in our sphere of influence? **If we respect them as a person, provide for their needs if it is within our power to do so, and care about their walk with the Spirit of Jesus each new day.**

**“LIVING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:
4. The Divine Provision: The Benefits Package”
Romans 6:5 – 13**

Introduction:

The Almighty God has purposed in His heart to **K**_____ each one of us **I**_____, as His sons and daughters, by His Presence living in us.

Satan and his beings hate God and violently oppose God’s Spirit living in us, transforming us, using us as vehicles of God’s **G**_____ and **G**_____!

The series is about **W**_____ through life **I** **S**_____ with the Spirit. It is built on how we answer this question: How does one become like God?

On the one hand there is God’s eternal purpose to walk in fellowship with us, to pour out His Spirit, His nature into our hearts and lives. On the other hand the evil one purposes to put human beings on his agenda, to make ourselves like God by human effort and discipline.

Here is what the Bible says about this important topic. Sooner or later we will all come up against a built-in **P**_____ to **F**_____!

If we take seriously God’s **D**_____ for our lives, His **C**_____ for our actions, and His **P**_____ as our provision, we find our ability to be godly by our best efforts is insufficient and we can tend to despair.

The Scriptures teach us the problem lies deeper than attitudes and behaviors. It lies in the individual **H**_____ of each person. Romans 7:14 – 20

I. The Presence of the Sinful Nature:

The Bible says there is an inner problem: The presence of a **S**_____ **N**_____ living in us because we are human beings, the “bent to sin.”

Three New Testament terms for the inner inclination to sin:

1. An **E**_____ **H**_____ : Jeremiah 17:9, Jesus’ words, Mark 7:20 – 23
2. The **C**_____ or **S**_____ **M**_____ : Romans 8:5 – 7
3. The **L**_____ of **S**_____ : Romans 7:21 – 25

We must deal with the inner conflict, the bent to run everything and everyone through self and its interests! We find two competing spiritual natures in our hearts: The **S** _____ nature and the **H** _____ **S** _____!

II. Crucifixion of the Sinful Nature:

The truth is there cannot be **T** _____ **L** _____ in my life. I am ruling my life, the Spirit of God is not ruling me!

There is a companion truth: **S** _____ **-S** _____ doesn't **W** _____!

The sinful nature doesn't obey our best efforts. We can't bargain with it, discipline it, or teach it. It must be dealt with more decisively: It must be **P** _____ to **D** _____ by faith in the crucifixion of Jesus for each one of us. Romans 6:6 – 10 and Galatians 5:24, 25

The leaning to self and its interests must be put to death in Jesus, if I am to experience the Holy Spirit **E** _____ in my heart's desires! He will act in me to do three things in my heart: **P** _____ me ... **C** _____ me, and **F** _____ **M** _____ from the "Law of sin."

III. The Benefits of Self-Crucifixion:

Benefit #1 – We may **B** _____ **B** _____ **F** _____ with the Holy Spirit

Benefit #2 – We begin to see the **I** _____ of **J** _____ more clearly

Benefit #3 – We experience His resurrection power to live in victory over **S** _____ **A** _____ and **P** _____ to enslave us, Romans 6:11 – 13

1. In our **A** _____ and **D** _____

2. In our **M** _____, in how we **T** _____ so **D** _____

Benefit #4 – We are enabled to live a **L** _____ of **L** _____ toward **G** _____

Mark 12:29, 30 – Notice how Jesus says love flows from the human life. It begins in the **H** _____ ... then the **S** _____ ... then the **M** _____ ... then the **A** _____

Benefit #5 – We are enabled to live a **L** _____ of **L** _____ toward **P** _____
Mark 12:31 Love others as we **L** _____ **O** _____

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. The Lord God has an eternal purpose in His heart and mind for human beings. What is that purpose and how is it achieved in life?
2. The arch-enemy of God, Satan, also has an eternal purpose for human lives. What is the evil one trying to get people to do? Why?
3. Why is it important for us to know the Biblical truth that our human effort, our ability to change ourselves is insufficient to deal with heart attitudes and desires?
4. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in leading us to deal with this inner leaning to sin, the presence of the sinful nature? Where and to whom is the Holy Spirit leading the believer?
5. We studied five benefits we may experience when we choose to put to death our sinful nature with its tendencies and desires? Which benefit or benefits have you personally experienced, and what did the experience mean to you?
6. When we experience the benefit of the resurrection life, power, and victory of Jesus in our lives, we are radically changed in affections, desires, and how we think. What changes do you see in your own spiritual journey in these areas?
7. Why does the Bible stress the benefit of being enabled to truly love God and one another? Why is holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love so important to the believer?
8. Read together aloud I John 4:7 – 20 and share insights you have about the ministry of the Holy Spirit creating agape love in our hearts and lives.
9. Read together aloud Romans 6:1 – 14 and discuss insights you have regarding the Holy Spirit leading us to inner victory in Jesus?
10. What impacted you as you heard the message about the Person and the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the human heart and soul, enabling us to experience His benefits package?