***The Spirit of Eternal Life, No. 2
RO101-01***

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Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans 8:9-11 as we continue with the Spirit of Eternal Life. This is segment number two.

It is self-evident that all of the human race can be divided into two classes of people: those who are under the absolute domination of the sin nature and those who are not. Unbelievers are under the absolute control of the sin nature. They produce only human good in all of their efforts. Christians do have a sin nature, but they are not under the authority of that sin nature anymore, so they produce with their lives divine good. Since unbelievers are under the absolute control of the sin nature, they cannot please God in any way, from the point of salvation to the point of doing anything good for the human race. Since Christians, on the other hand, are not under the authority of the sin nature, they can please God, and they can produce an enormous amount of divine good.

The difference between believers and unbelievers is simply that the Christians are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit who has assumed the position of absolute authority which was once held in them by the sin nature. So we have learned that every Christian is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the point of salvation. Once you have accepted Christ as Savior, you don't have to do another thing to secure the personal presence of the Spirit of God; it's automatic. God the Father and God the Son, we have learned, have sent God the Holy Spirit to indwell every church's believer. The Christian's body then becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit. The body belongs to God through the price of redemption, which was paid by Jesus Christ on the cross. For this reason, the Christian is called upon to glorify God with his body, and of course, the soul, which goes with the body, and with his human spirit. We are further warned in scripture that the Christian who defiles his physical body through mental and overt immorality is subject to divine discipline and even to the extent of suffering unto death.

**Reasons the Holy Spirit Indwells the Christian**

God the Holy Spirit, we have stressed, is a person who is equal to the Father and to the Son, who indwells the Christian for several reasons. One, to cause the believer to glorify God the Father in his life. Furthermore, to produce the character of Christ as the fruit of the Holy Spirit, is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is also in the Christian to enable the believer to imitate Christ in his life, to act the way Jesus Christ would act in a situation. And then, fourthly, He indwells us to illuminate the meaning of scripture. And then, the Spirit indwells us to fill us for power in service. We cannot really accomplish Christian service that changes the records in Heaven without the working of God the Holy Spirit.

There's an enormous amount of church activity that involve a lot of people and a lot of money, and when it comes to changing the records in Heaven, it's zilch - nothing - of value, because it is all human effort. Never forget that everything that God the Holy Spirit produces that is of genuine value and has genuine eternal impact, the sin nature can produce a counterfeit that looks very much like the same thing. So don't be a sucker for the big church, the big operation, the big name, the big hullabaloo, and say, "Isn't this wonderful what God is doing here." It is very easy to get a big operation that's very impressive if you'll just play on people's emotions. If you'll just give people kicks of one kind and another, you'll draw the crowd, and people will think they have approached God. So, do not be impressed with the external, sensual, hullabaloo approach. When it comes to eternity, people are going to find where the real values lay. What God does, that's what counts.

And please do not forget that it is this God through the power of the Holy Spirit that is the only One who makes promotions. Those of you who have been in the military service remember that you always look forward to when your number came up. When your number came up, that meant that you were next in line for promotion. And you know one thing for sure: no matter what happened, until that number came up, you did not have promotion until the official promotion came up the line. And if God the Holy Spirit does not promote you, don't con yourself into believing you're something. You are nothing. The only promotion that counts is what God does. And people can promote each other, and people can elevate each other, and people can talk to each other so much that they really think they're something. And suddenly they forget the principle of the Word of God that says, "Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think."

If you remember that, you'll be free of the number one deteriorating, corrupting quality in the human being produced by the sin nature, and that's arrogance. Arrogance is a number one quality of the sin nature, and it is arrogance that destroys everything that we Christians can do. And I'll tell you that about the time you get on the track to do something right and you are a biblically-oriented Christian, you can count that the approach to you is going to be arrogance. They devil is going to come in, he's going to tickle your arrogance. He's going to expand your self-confidence and your assurance of yourself, and you're going to go down. He's going to flame you out without any trouble at all. The Christian life is the life that humbly recognizes we cannot do it on our own. When God the Holy Spirit does it, something has been done. When He promotes something, then it's been promoted. And because you may minister in your area of work to a few, don't ever sell yourself short that that few is not going to make an impact that's going to reverberate in heaven in a tremendous way.

And furthermore, one other thing is that God the Holy Spirit indwells us for the specific purpose of assisting us in our prayers. So verse 9 of Romans 8, we have translated like this: "You however," (speaking to the Christians), "are not in flesh," (in sin nature control), "but in Spirit," (in Holy Spirit control), "since indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you." He lives in you. Now the last line of verse 9 says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." This is the mark, the true mark, or salvation. The word "now" is the Greek word "de," and it introduces here a spiritual principle. The word "if" is one of those first-class conditions in the Greek language, and you know that that means that you can translate that by the word "since." We know that it is a true situation. "Now SINCE any man have not the Spirit of Christ." And this is assumed to be a condition in the first-class that is true with all unbelievers. The word "any man" is the word "tis," which means "anyone." The word "had" is the word "echo;" this means "to possess." It has with it the negative "ou," the strong negative, so that it is talking about something that is not possessed - absolutely does not possess. It is in the presence tense, which means that it is always constantly true. Here's a person who does not possess the Holy Spirit indwelling him. It is active. This is describing something that is actively true as an individual. It's in the indicative mood; a statement of fact. And which you do not possess is described as Spirit, "pneuma," and specifically, "Spirit of Christ," - "Christos." And that is referring to God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ is a reference to God the Holy Spirit. The name of the Son of God here, "Christ," refers to His Messianic role as the Savior and the King of Israel.

As you know, we have already learned that God the Holy Spirit is in the arrangement of the authority line of the Godhead, the member of the Godhead who is sent on His mission. We found out in John 15:26 where Jesus says, "But when the Comforter," (that is the Holy Spirit), "is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." So that in that one verse you see, Jesus says, "I'm going to send the Holy Spirit, and God the Father is going to send the Holy Spirit." So the Spirit of Christ here refers to God the Holy Spirit. We have this evidence in a few other scriptures that we might look at. Galatians 4:6, "And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son," there you have it again, the Spirit of Christ, "in your hearts crying, 'Abba, Father.'" So here you have again a reference to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. Philippians 1:19 does that: "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." That is referring to God the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:11 does the same thing: ".searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them" (that is, God the Holy Spirit), "did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." This verse in 1 Peter is observing the fact that the men who wrote the Old Testament scriptures, the prophets, were confused as God the Holy Spirit gave them the information and led them. When they came to describing the future ministry of the Messiah, He who is to come, they found the Messiah described as a Lamb, meek, and to be put to death. And it also described the Messiah as the conquering Lion, described as being from the tribe of Judah. And they wondered how those two were related. You see, they didn't understand that there was the couple thousand-year era of the church in between a first and second coming: first time as a Lamb, second time as a conquering king. This verse has to do with something about Jesus Christ, and so the phrase is used, "the Spirit of Christ." And that's how the Bible has referred to God the Holy Spirit on occasion; when it has something to do with the specific other person of the Godhead, it associates the Holy Spirit specifically with that person.

**How to Be Indwelt by the Holy Spirit**

So, "But if anyone does not have the Holy Spirit," (that is, Holy Spirit dwelling in him), "he is," this is the word "eimi," this is the word for "status quo." And it also has a negative - no - and that means that something is NOT the case. It's present tense; this is never true. It's active voice, which just means that this is personally never true of an individual. And it is indicative, a statement of fact, and that is, "he is none of Him," and the word, "Him," refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. So that anyone who is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit is not in Christ, and so you are not saved. If you are not indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, you are not saved.

Jude 17-19 put it this way: "But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit." Here in the book of Jude, you have a very clean-cut description of unbelievers, and after saying several terrible things about them, he climaxes with saying, "They do not have the Holy Spirit within them." In 1 John 4:13, "By this know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." One of the great things that Jesus told His disciples in John 14:20 is that they would be in Him and He would be in them. "Ye in me, and I in you." How is that thought about: unless that condition exists in your life, you're not going to heaven; you're on your way to hell? Unless you are in Christ and Christ is in you, that relationship is only established when God the Holy Spirit indwells you as a human being. Only those who are indwelt by the Spirit of God are going to Heaven.

That raises a very serious question of how that is accomplished. As we search through the Word of God, we discover that the pattern is very simple: only those who personally have trusted in Jesus Christ as Savior are placed into the body of Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit and are then indwelt by the Holy Spirit who is Himself the seal of their eternal salvation. The progression goes something like this: Acts 16:31, "They said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'" The first step is you trust in Christ as personal Savior. Then, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 comes into the picture: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." "Drink into one Spirit" means to be indwelt by one Holy Spirit. So, we trust in Christ as Savior, God the Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. We are then indwelt by God the Holy Spirit.

And 1 Corinthians 6:19 comes into the picture: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, who ye have of God, ye are not your own?" As a result of that baptism of the Holy Spirit, which baptized us into Christ, we have also received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit so that He is in us as His temple. And incidentally, the baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place automatically at the point of your salvation.

This is why the charismatic movement has swung over into the land of the Occult, because they have violated that basic truth. Charismatics are proclaiming their serious heresy that you receive the Holy Spirit after salvation. And you see, what Paul says is that if you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you have no relationship to the living God at all; you are none of His. Ephesians 1:13 closes the picture: "In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." So that we have not only trusted in Christ, then been baptized into the Body of Christ, then been indwelt by God the Holy Spirit; our body is His temple. He has become our seal, which means you can't ever go back. You can't ever lose that salvation again. So the question that every human being must face is: "How do I get God the Holy Spirit to indwell me?" Because the Apostle Paul makes it very clear that if any human being does not have the Spirit of Christ indwelling him, he is none of His, meaning he does not belong to Jesus Christ. He is not saved.

Now I can assure you that there are lots of misconceptions about how to secure a saving relationship to the Living God, and you must be aware of those. People think that these are ways they can do it, and they must be alerted that they are mistaken - mistaken to their eternal doom. You cannot, for example, secure the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by religious rituals - some humans act. You cannot do it with religious rituals. You cannot do it by observing Christmas and Easter as holy days. You cannot secure the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by some act of self-crucifixion. You cannot secure Him by walking down an aisle after a preacher has preached about some subject totally unrelated to the Gospel. You can't get it walking down the aisle even if he's preached the aisle. You can't raise your hand to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. You can't secure it by the cleaning up of your life. You can't secure it by taking a vow to do things better than you've done them in the past. You can't secure the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by saying that you'll have a positive mental attitude toward things from now on. You can't do it by joining the Peace Corps. You can't do it by being dedicated to any kind of good works. You can't do it by feeding the starving. You can't do it by rehabilitating drug addicts. You can't do it even by taking care of the widows and the orphans. As worth an effort as that is, that will not secure for you the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is a very important thing that you understand that salvation, going to Heaven, being right with God, depends upon being indwelled by God the Holy Spirit. If you are not indwelt by Him, you are headed for the Lake of Fire.

In verse 10, the Apostle Paul says, "And if Christ be in you." Now taking up the other side of the picture. "But if Christ be in you." This "if," which we have here again, is our word, "eimi" is first class; so you know that you should translate that as "since." He is talking here now to these Christians in Rome, and he says, "Since it is true of you people. Since Christ is in you." And in the Greek language, there is no verb. It doesn't say "be" in the Greek. It just says, "And since Christ in you." And when the Greek talks that way, that's clipped language for emphasis. We do that in English too. We just say things in a shortened fashion. And that's what he is saying here, he says, "But Christ in you," referring here to Christians. Every believer in the church age is indwelt by Jesus Christ, and that's what we're talking about. If Christ be in you, God the Holy Spirit is in you - He's called the "Spirit of Christ" - is in you. Why? Because it is also not only God the Holy Spirit who indwells us by it is also the Lord Jesus Christ that indwells us. Since Christ is in you, every believer in the church age is indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 14:20, "Ye in me, and I in you." Let's look at 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves, whether ye are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know ye not yourselves how Jesus Christ is in you unless you're discredited?" So now we go up one step more. Paul says not only must you be indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but if you are, there's something else that's true. You are also indwelt by the Lord Jesus Christ. The indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are told, is the Christian's basis of his hope for glory. Colossians 1:27: ".to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." I remind you that when the New Testament uses the word "hope," it does not refer to something that is possible. We use the word "hope" with uncertainty: "I hope that this will happen," meaning "I'm not sure it will." But that's not the way the word "hope" is used in the New Testament. When it uses the word "hope," it means it's going to happen; it's a certainty. So here we have hope in the Bible, a confident expectation of something desirable without any fear of disappointment. The hope in Colossians 1:27 refers to the anticipation of a sure thing for the Christian because he is indwelt by the person of Jesus Christ. And what this refers to is the certainty of the Christian's glorification.

**The Shekinah Glory**

When we studied the doctrine of glory, you may remember that glory referred to the visible, dazzling brightness and splendor which projected the essence of God. In the Old Testament, it was referred to as the Shekinah glory of God. It was the visible presence of God in the form of a fire cloud. The word "Shekinah" glory means simply "dwelling in glory." When the Jews were led out, that glory cloud went before them, and they knew that that was God. And they knew that the reason that brilliant, dazzling light was there shimmering and moving before them was because that reflected the essence of God. It reflected the absolute beauty of what God's character is.

Now, that's what we're talking about here. The Christian, let's make it a little more personal - you people sitting here - have the absolute hope of someday having that same appearance. Someday, you will appear as a Shekinah glory cloud. It is our hope of glory that is based upon the simple fact that we are indwelt by Jesus Christ. So someday, you will shine forth with all the dazzling splendor that characterizes our God. The salvation which Christ Jesus brings to indwell the believer ensures for him an eternal glory. Because Jesus Christ is there indwelling, you are assured of this glory someday.

2 Timothy 2:10 puts it this way: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake." Paul says, "As a missionary, I take all kinds of gaff. I take it for the sake of the people who are going to be born again." ".That they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." It's not only salvation - that's enough. It's enough that you're not going to hell. But he says that it's going to be more than that because God the Holy Spirit indwells you that spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and Jesus Christ also indwells you. And because He indwells you, you will be like him someday. That's exactly what I John 3:2 tells you: "When you see Him, you shall be like Him." You are going to be just like Him, and you will reflect that amazing glory that characterizes the Son of God.

So, no matter how shoddy we Christians can look now through our conduct, how shoddy we may be in our speech, and how shoddy we may be in our thinking, we will one day, nevertheless, radiate the glory of God. And I think it is wise, therefore, that we remember this not only about ourselves but that we remember this about other Christians in our dealing with them in their unattractive moments. This is not a simple doctrine. This is an enormous truth. A Christian who learns this is the Christian who takes a giant step forward towards stability. He's the guy that cannot be moved, the guy that's not going to be bowled over. He's the guy that's not going to be caught up in every whim and every wind that's blowing and every trend that's going and every fracas and every frack that comes up. He's going to have his eyes out there to where he knows he is someday going to reflect the dazzling glory of God. While he remembers this about himself, he also has the capacity to remember that that would be true about the worst of Christians.

This indwelling of the Lord Jesus Christ is furthermore a basis of our fellowship with Him. Because the Lord Jesus lives within you, He walks with us as a friend with friend, as one with whom we are joint heirs. And if we are joint heirs with Him, then that means that all of the Father's blessings to the Son are also ours. Romans 8:17 says it this way: ".And if we are Children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." And there you have it again.

Because we are heirs with Jesus, this Savior who now indwells you, one of the things that is characteristic of Him, is that dazzling glory that Peter, James, and John saw on the Mount of Transfiguration when the Lord Jesus said, "Now watch, boys. Just for a moment, I'm going to pull the cloak away. My dazzling, brilliant glory has been hidden. Now I'm going to let you see it for just a moment, and then I'm going to cover it up again." And when the saw it, it bowled them over.

They were so awed that they went stupid. Peter says, "Let's build three tabernacles, and let's never leave this mountaintop again." Peter was such a monastically-minded character. He was an ascetic at heart, I believe. But the first thing he had to do was to say something stupid. And he was good at doing that, but it's understandable. And when you see each other in your dazzling glory, you'll probably say something stupid too, and make some kind of suggestion about it.

But this is exactly what we're told in Romans 8:17. It is because He is in us we are joint-heirs with Him. We're going to have this glory together with Him. So the indwelling is the basis of our fellowship with Him as friend with friend, inheriting everything that He has.

**Jesus as Our Intercessor and Advocate**

The fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ is expressed in His ministry furthermore as our intercessor and advocate before God the Father. And you never want to forget this about yourself. John 17:9, this is what Jesus does for us every moment of the day: "I pray for them:" [we Christians], "I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given me; for they are thine." So here we have the dramatic declaration of the Lord Jesus that every moment of the day, He acts as our intercessor. Because He lives in you, He prays for you. He intercedes for you. And how much trouble, and how many problems in life, you and I have escaped. You'll never know, perhaps until we get to Heaven, because Jesus Christ stood in the way and preserved us from it.

Furthermore, when we do stuff out of line, 1 John 2:1 gives us another comforting ministry that this indwelling Christ does for us. John says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." John says, "If you do sin, I have written you the Word of God. I have given you the instructional doctrine so you know what God expects. You know how to think in divine viewpoint. But if you do misstep and you do sin, I want you to know that you have a lawyer in Heaven in the person of the righteous Son of God who will immediately stand before the bar of justice of Almighty God, the Judge of the universe, and He will plead His blood in behalf of you.

And there's nothing you can do that will ever cause you to lose your salvation. So that on the one hand, He prays for you. He intercedes for you to be everything that you should be, that you could be. On the other hand, when you override with your volition, that which God has for you, and you enter the realm of sin, He's there as your lawyer pleading your case for you - just because He lives in you.

Carnality, of course, locks out the Lord Jesus Christ from moving in fellowship with you day by day, moment by moment. And so He comes, when that happens, He knocks on your heart's door to seek entrance, and this is one place that it is legitimately true - this is the place indeed where you must open your heart's door to Jesus Christ. He comes to your heart's door because He lives in you. And when he finds that you've slammed the door shut on Him through your sin and through your willfulness of one kind and another, through your living in the arrogance of your sin nature, through your forgetting David's precious little statement and discovery that the battle is the Lord's. And when you get in there with your human viewpoint sin nature muscle that carries you far afield from the power of the Spirit of God working, then that door has been slammed on your guest. And that's not very nice when you have somebody as a guest in your home and you want their fellowship and you go and you slam the door on your room to Him. So when you do that, the Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus, who's still going to be there - He's not going to leave your temple - He comes and He knocks on your heart's door.

Revelation 3:20 tells us about that. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." This is the heart of a Christian (a Christian in carnality, a Christian who has stepped out of line of divine viewpoint). "If anyone hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Lord Jesus, your guest, will knock on the door of the room that you've gone into and slammed on him, and he will request entrance so that you may establish your fellowship with him once more. How do you open the door? 1 John 1:9 says exactly how to reach down, turn the knob, and invite Him back in. And then He will sit down, and it uses the old Asian, ancient-world picture of fellowship which is sitting down to a meal. That's why he says, "Come in, and I'll sup with you." That was the sign of fellowship. People who were enemies did not sit down and eat together with one another. People who were warm friends, those are the people who sit down and eat together.

**Confession and Reestablishment of Fellowship**

And so, 1 John 1:9 tells us that this is how you open the door: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The key here is that we confess our known sins to God the Father, and because He is a faithful God, He forgives every time so that we are able to open our heart's door immediately to welcome His Son back into fellowship with us. He forgives us that known sin because of the fact that His Son has already paid for that. So he's just in forgiving it. Furthermore, it says he will cleanse us from all unrighteousness so that even those occasions that we don't remember specifically that we have been guilty of that has shut the door on the Lord, those also are covered, and the door is open when we confess the known sins.

And that confession, of course, is to God the Father. Whatever human relationships you may want to readjust is apart - something else - apart from this. There is a church now that I read of recently which is under a lawsuit because a lady in the church had been guilty of some immorality, had repented, and discontinued the practice and had expressed her regret to the board of elders, but the board of elders were not satisfied with that. They said, "You must stand before the whole congregation and make the confession of your evil," which of course, the Word of God never authorizes. Well, they have a lawsuit on their hands, and maybe with a little financial pressure from them, they may even get their doctrine straight on this subject.

**The Indwelling of God the Father**

So those who, through salvation, are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit, they are indwelt in fact by what the Bible calls the Spirit of Christ for the simple reason that they are also indwelled by the person of Jesus Christ. Both persons of the Godhead are in the Christian's body which becomes their temple, but the Godhead has not been fractured. I'm happy to tell you that the visitation, the indwelling, is complete.

For in John 14:23, we find that God the Father joins the Son and the Holy Spirit in your body as His temple. John 14:23: "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If any man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." So that both the Son and the Father indwell the believer. If you love Him, because you know His Word, and you respond to it, the indwelling which will be on the basis of fellowship so that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all there together.

**The Inevitability of Death**

So simple words in Romans 8:10, fraught with tremendous meaning: "And if Christ," (since Christ), "is in you, the body," and here the word body is the word "soma," and it refers to the physical body of the Christian. The Greek language has a little particle, we call it, this word "men," when indicates that a contrast is going to be made. Here, the contrast you will see is between the human body and the human spirit. And we'll just have to touch on this to get introduced to it, and then we'll delve into it more next time. But what he says here is actually, "Since Christ is in you - the physical body," on the one hand. Or you might say, "Although the physical body." And again, because he wants to emphasize this, he doesn't put in the word "is" in the Greek. We have it in English just to smooth out the sentence. He leaves it out. He just says, "And the body dead." "Nekros." This is the Greek word simply referring to the absence of life. The Christian's body has upon it the stamp of death.

Genesis 3:19, we discover that the origin of that problem came with the first two human beings. In Genesis 3:19, we read, ".In the sweat of thy face," to Adam, after he had sinned, "thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the dust; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and to dust shall thou return." God made Adam. He made him out of the inert materials of the ground, and then God reached down and blew into the nostrils of Adam what the scriptures say the "Neshama," the Hebrew word, the Neshama - the "soul life" - and Adam, we are told, became a living soul.

An idea occurred to me this week. I haven't thought it through, but I'll mention it to you, and you can finish thinking it through for me. As I was thinking about the fact that the physical body has upon it the stamp of death, and that's what we're told here, I thought of the passage in Genesis 35:18 that describes the birth of Jacob's youngest son, Benjamin. When his mother Rachel gave birth to Benjamin, she died in childbirth. And the way the Bible describes her death is that her soul left her body. "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin." "Ben-oni" means "son of my sorrow," which he was to the dying mother, but his father named him Benjamin, which means "son of my right hand," which indeed he was to Jacob.

So that we have a very clear scriptural declaration that physical death is the soul leaving the body. There is a physical life if there's a soul in it - it's living. If there's no soul in it, it's dead. And I thought, "I wonder if we can apply this to the question of abortion," - that debate as to when life begins. And it just occurred to me that since a fetus is alive, it must have a soul. If it has a soul, it's a human being. And when a child is stillborn, why is it stillborn? Because it does not have a soul. When Rachel died, it was because her soul left her body. So if there is no soul in that developing child, it wouldn't be alive. It would be dead. It would be as inert as the dirt of the ground out of which Adam was made. And the Bible says that that's the sequence: you came from no life, I blew into you the soul life, now you reproduce with that soul life. When I pull that soul life out, whether I pull it out within the womb or outside of the womb, what is in there dies. But it does not die until I pull the soul out. So if the developing structure in the womb is alive, it has a soul. If it has a soul, it is a human being. So I think that maybe that would be a very compelling argument to establish the fact that when you are dealing with a fetus, you are dealing with a bonafide human being. To take its life then is an act of murder.

In any case, what Paul tells us here is that there is upon all of us as we stand as Christians the terrible stamp of death. And in Hebrews 9:27, we are told that it's just down the line for all of us. Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Once to die, and after this, the judgment. And it comes so quickly. So much arrogance of the sin nature could be eliminated if we realized what the scripture says is so true that we live and move and have our being in Him. We are stamped for death, and we never know when it's going to come.

I was telling the people at prayer meeting my number three son studied German at the University of Hamburg. Hamburg is way up north. It's like being our northern states. Of course, it's wintertime. And he and two other friends were visiting along the Elbe River that had an extension of a lake - Lake Alster. And his two friends were a short distance away looking at a World War I monument, and Paul went down to the edge of the lake. It had some steps going down into it, and there were some birds out there on the lake pecking away at some breadcrumbs that somebody had thrown out there. So while he's stepping up to watch the birds, he said the next moment, his feet were out from under him. He was going down that embankment and out onto the ice, and it broke.

And he said and he went right down under, and with all his winter clothes and his boots, and then it became summer camp Red Cross swimming time for him. He kicked to the surface, and he said, "By the time I came up once, my eyebrows had ice on them. It was enough air in my clothes in order to give me buoyancy to come back up, but that quickly filled, and I could just fill the drag pulling down no matter how hard I kicked." And he said, "As I reached out for the ice, it kept breaking off." But he said, "I fought closer, close enough to where I could finally grab the step."

At that time, his friends who had heard came running over, and he managed to get out. His summary, being the philosopher that he is, is that such moments demonstrate how sweet life is. Using an old Jackie Gleason phrase, "how sweet it is," came to great reality in that moment when he discovered how tenuous is that moment of life when you don't even expect that now comes terminal point. He did manage to get home, in case you're wondering. He was encased in solid ice, and it finally melted out. This just pointed up to him in his youthful 24 years that life does not go on forever. There is the stamp of death. All that he needed were the right conditions for it to be terminated, and it didn't take much more for that to have happened.

So again, it is only as God graces us out and as we use the capacity of prayer and we call upon the resources of that indwelling power of the Spirit of God do we have the capacity to overcome this quality of death within us. We who live were the body of death. But around that is a silver lining that the Apostle Paul immediately paints around it that just takes you from the soberness of our momentary existence to the mountaintop of, again, the exhilaration of we who are going to reflect, of all things, the dazzling brilliance of the glory of God. If only we could keep from being so cheap and so small and so puny and so insignificant and so unroyal now in view of what we shall sometime be.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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