

# KNOWN BY THE SPIRIT

By Mark Beaird

## **Text: Romans 8:12-17**

Since you have become a Christian, has anyone ever held something against you that you did before you were saved? If you have had this experience, then you know that some people will never let you forget what you did or what you said, no matter what you may be like today. To them we will always be known by our past life. Whether we are happy about it and regardless of the accuracy of their opinion, they have formed their opinions about us based on how they perceived our past actions. So what do you do? We just have to go forward with God -- forgetting those things which are behind.

However people may have misjudged us in the past, as Christians, we must strive to live a life that is pleasing to God. In Christ "old things have passed away and behold all things have become new." Just as we may have been known by the world in relation to our past lives and deeds, from this point on, we can be known by the Spirit because of our new lives in Christ.

As we look at our text, we see that the apostle Paul has arrived at several *conclusions* concerning the Christians' life in the Spirit.

### **I. IF WE LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT WE HAVE NO OBLIGATIONS TO THE FLESH (vv.12-13).**

#### **A. In other words, we are not compelled to live a sinful life.**

Romans 6:13-16 says, "And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"

**B. But, in Christ, we are compelled by the Spirit to live a godly life.**

Romans 6:17, "But God be thanked that you though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered."

The Spirit compelled them through the Word in their heart and they obeyed and were set free!

**C. To ignore the leading of the Spirit is to go back into the way of death.**

**II. IF WE ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT THEN WE KNOW WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION (vv.14-15).**

**A. We are led into sonship; we do not evolve into it.**

The difference? Being led is the work of God, evolving is the work of man.

Robert E. Daughtery explains God's leadership for us today.

"First, God leads through His Word. The more we read, memorize, and meditate upon it, the more sensitive we are to His leadership. Then God leads through His Church. Just as the family teaches the child to walk, talk, play, and eat, the church family teaches its children to seek the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of God in all things.

God also leads through the personal working of the Holy Spirit within us (John 14:17). "The Holy Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are child of God" (Rom. 8:16). The Holy Spirit guides us when we don't know what decision to make. God's Word says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it'" (Isaiah 30:21). (White, 330)

**B. The Spirit's leadership does not involve a new kind of bondage.**

One translation renders v. 15, "You haven't received the spirit of slaves that leads you into fear again. Instead, you have received the spirit of God's adopted children by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (GWS)

F. F. Bruce writes, "The term 'adoption' (used here in older English versions) may have a somewhat artificial sound in our ears; but in the Roman world of the first century A.D. an adopted son was a son deliberately chosen by his adoptive father to perpetuate his name and inherit his estate; he was no whit inferior in status to a son born in the ordinary course of nature, and might well enjoy the father's affection more fully and reproduce the father's character more worthily. (157)

### **III. IF WE HAVE THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT WE HAVE GOD'S ASSURANCE (vv.16-17).**

#### **A. The Spirit has been placed in our hearts to confirm that we are the children of God.**

Hebrew law stated that every matter was to be established by the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses. How do I know I am saved? How do I know that I have been adopted? The Holy Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God.

There's my 2 witnesses!

#### **B. The Spirit has come to guarantee the inheritance of the children.**

Ephesians 1:11-14, "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the

guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

We were slaves to sin; now we are children and then heirs. We can know the reality of the Spirit in our lives. We can be **KNOWN BY THE SPIRIT!**

According to H.D. Williams, as a Christian, I can know His workings in at least 4 ways:

1) **He comforts me.** The Holy Spirit not only gives comfort, He is the Comforter. The very fact of His presence in my heart gives me assurance of peace and joy.

2) **He teaches me.** This great Teacher who comes from God does not speak of Himself but of Him who sent Him. A carnal mind cannot understand the language of the Spirit.

3) **He gives me power in prayer.** The Holy Spirit comes to my aid and bears me up in times of weakness. "The Spirit Himself makes intercession for [me] with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).

4) **He gives power to witness.** I received power to witness for the Lord after the Holy Spirit came on me. The figure of fire expresses more fully the intensity and power of my experience. Fire is the most forceful and suggestive of natural elements and is used to symbolize the Holy Spirit. Fire is a penetrating element. It goes to the very fiber of my soul and is internal in its action.

(White, 378)

## **CONCLUSION**

Someone wrote, "Our life in Christ can be compared to an aqueduct, the stone waterways that brought from nearby mountains into parched cities in Italy and Spain, and that are still used in some countries today.

The objective fountain of our spiritual lives, the Word of God, is like the huge stone aqueduct itself. The subjective elements, our daily experience of Christ, is like the fresh water flowing through it.

Some Christians neglect the Word and seek only the subjective experience. But without the solid Word of God to contain and channel that experience, the experience itself drains away into error and is lost.

Other Christians boast well-engineered aqueducts based on extensive knowledge of the Bible, but they are bone dry. They bring no refreshment. Strong spiritual lives require both a strong knowledge of the Word of God and an intimate daily relationship with Christ." (Larson, 244)

### **References**

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Larson, Craig B., Ed., Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching, Grand Rapids, Mich., Baker Books. 1994

White, Robert, Spirit Walk, Cleveland, Tenn., Pathway Press. 1995