

WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES

Romans 8:1-38

By Raymond White

In this text there are four things that the Holy Spirit does for us.

[1] THE HOLY SPIRIT SUBDUES OUR FLESH

Romans 8:1 Therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. :5 They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. :9 Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. :10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. :13 ...if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The point here is that it is the Holy Spirit that enables us to conquer sin, and we need to conquer sin in order to live. Those who have the spirit follow the things of the spirit, everyone else follows the things of the flesh. Or, to rephrase it as Paul does, to live, you must “mortify” (kill) the deeds of the body, and that, you can only do through the Spirit who keeps pointing us and nudging us to the path we ought to be walking.

By the way, note that spirit guides us on a holy “walk,” not a holy “arrival.” It’s the trip that matters. And if you stay on that “walk,” there is “no condemnation.” This is important because many Christians continually beat themselves up because they’re not there yet. Where “there” is, no one is quite sure, other than it’s somewhere other than where we are. It’s not a holy arrival that the spirit is nudging us to (at least not in this life), but a holy walk, as Paul says here, “walk in the spirit.”

[2] THE HOLY SPIRIT ASSURES THAT WE ARE SONS OF GOD

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. :15 ...ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. :16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.

The point here is that the reason we believe we are God’s children is because the Holy Spirit convinces us. Our own spirits suspect it, but God’s Spirit confirms it and causes us to cry to God, not just as our God but as our Father, in the most affectionate term available, Abba, which is to say, “Daddy,” that word which a young child calls up to a loving parent.

And by the way, Paul does first say “Sons,” but he soon says “children” which is gender neutral so we might rightly infer that “Sons” really does mean “sons and daughters.”

[3] THE HOLY SPIRIT INSURES OUR INHERITANCE

Romans 8:17 And if 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 with him.

A child inherits. Whether a natural child as Christ is, or an adopted child as we are, the rights of inheritance are the same. What does Christ inherit? Everything. That's his birthright as Son of the Father. That he has chosen to make us his brothers and sisters, so that we also inherit, well that's just our good fortune, isn't it?

There's also **2 Corinthians 5:5** ...*hath given us the earnest of the Spirit*. That is, the spirit's pledge, the guarantee, or literally, the "engagement ring" translated here as "earnest." The "earnest," the "engagement ring" is what makes the promise binding, irrevocable.

[4] THE HOLY SPIRIT CARRIES OUR PRAYERS TO GOD

Romans 8:26 *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

When you pray, are you sure you know what to pray for? And do you know what words to say? Actually, we don't do a very good job of it. We too often pray for the wrong things, **James 4:3** *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*. And we don't pray hard enough for the right things, **Ephesians 3:20** *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or thing...*

Clearly we need help with our prayers. Well, the Holy Spirit does help us. It seems that he intercepts our flawed prayers, edits them to what they really should be, and passes them onto God. And that communication that occurs between the Holy Spirit and God the Father, if we were able to listen in on it, is something we wouldn't even understand. To us, they would just sound like groaning, perhaps like digital transference, after our analog sound have been converted.

In any case, I'm glad that God hears my prayers, the spirit edited version that is.