

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 20, 2020

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever have mornings when your alarm goes off and you start thinking about some prickly people you're gonna have to deal with that day, or you think about problems that you're going to face? Or you just wanna curl up and go back to sleep? Or do ever have a night in the middle of the night, kind of night, so you toss and turn, you fret and worry, just wishing you had some kind of special power?

My go to verse when I'm needing special power, special wisdom, is the magnificent Eighth Chapter of Romans that some of called Romans 8 to Himalayas of the Bible is perhaps no other chapters sort so high with more peaks and pinnacles of God's love than Romans 8... Here is my go-to verse, Romans 8:11. I read, If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies. Also through His Spirit, that dwells in you.

The working assumption all the way through Romans 8 is that every believer, every Christian has the Holy Spirit within. In fact, Scripture says that a believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, where the Holy Spirit chooses to live. That's done in 1 Corinthians 6:19. So Romans 8-11, it begins with, If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you. That's assumed. He does dwell in you. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies. Also, through his Spirit, who lives in you.

On that dark Good Friday afternoon, Jesus was literally a dead, he was limp lifeless from bearing the penalty for our sins. Then on the third day, the Holy Spirit raised Jesus to life. He did not resuscitate Jesus, He raised Jesus to new life. To a glorified eternal life. So following Paul is saying here, He's saying to the same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, that that same Holy Spirit is living in you, to give you new life, to give you new power.

Now, if we miss this here in Romans 8:11, we would see the same spirit powered life in Ephesians 1:18 through 20, where are Paul writes The immeasurable greatness of His power for us who believe is according to the working of His great power, when He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand in the heavenly places. So we see the Holy Spirit that lives in you is your power source. The Christian life is not a do-it-yourself project.

The Christian life is rather partnership with the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, He dwells in Him to give life to you. Now, sometimes people read Romans 8:11, and they think that Paul is talking about the wonderful promise of resurrection of life in when God raises our bodies from the dead, and that will be wonderful. But that is not what Paul is talking about, rather Paul is talking about here is what the Holy Spirit is doing in you and me. Now, present in as the Holy Spirit lives within us to make us alive with the fruit of the spirit... That is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, so that we can cry out Abba, Father, daddy. That's the Holy Spirit in you. So he who was Christ from the dead. We'll give life., notice Paul says, will give life to your mortal bodies. In the Greek were translated, mortal means a body that is prone to death, bodies that are dying, but they're not dead yet, the Holy Spirit is giving life to them, is

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what Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 4:16, Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

So as our bodies wear down, we have the exciting prospect of every day being renewed, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and frankly, that's why I don't mind having birthdays, because I'm being renewed by the Holy Spirit every day. Now person who has helped me to understand more of this kind of spirit-powered living... It is a great twentieth century, Chinese Christian Watchman Nee. Watchman Nee was a church leader in China when the Communist Party came to power, and He suffered persecution, was in prison, but Watchman Nee did so much to plant a seed of what we're seeing today in China's growing underground church. Well, Watchman Nee tells of when he was a young man swimming in a river with a group of Christian brothers, and he sees one of the brothers, well, he seems to be having a cramp, he's struggling to stay afloat, and so Watchman signals for another brother that was in the water nearby, who was an excellent swimmer, he signals for him to help the struggling man, but he does nothing. Finally, finally, when the struggling swimmer goes under, then the brother, which is a few swift strokes, goes to him, and soon both of them are safe on shore. Well Watchman Nee tells us that he was absolutely furious with the brother, he says, Didn't you see him drowning? Why did you wait so long to save him? And then the excellent swimmer explained, he says, Well, if I tried to help him sooner, he would have grabbed hold of me so tight and both of us would have gone under... You see, a drowning man cannot be saved until he is utterly exhausted, there's too much fight in him, he must be exhausted before he can be saved.

Well, March watch mine said that he got point. And he applies it to you and me who are perhaps trying so hard to stay afloat, we're trying so hard to live the Christian life, and it's not until we are utterly exhausted in trying to do it on our own, that the Holy Spirit can then give us His new power, his new power for living. Because the same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, He lives in you, to give you new power today for living...

Now, if what I've talked about today excites you. I want you to know that that's the Holy Spirit, that's the Holy Spirit who's calling you to stop trying to do it on your own, is calling you to live each day reliantly on him.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thank you for listening. Until next time.

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