

[Gauger:] Hi, welcome to the Monday edition of *PROCLAIM!*, the daily visit with Michael Easley who serves as President of Chicago’s Moody Bible Institute. You’ve joined us in a study of the Book of Romans, Chapter 8 is where we’re headed, in a message that Michael has titled “Change Your Mindset”. You know, it is one thing to be hostile. Not good. But to be hostile toward God, that’s not only futile, it’s foolish; but lest we let ourselves off the hook too quickly. Let’s join Michael Easley now in today’s study.

[Easley:] In James 4:4 we see the same word used twice in a very interesting way. “Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy.” It’s the same word, hostility, an enemy of God.

Now, the hard part about this truth is, is that there is no middle ground here. If we are not connected rightly to God, we hate Him. You say, “I don’t hate Him. I really don’t hate Him.” Well, we do because, “In our nature, who we are, how we think, how we live, the mindset on flesh,” Paul says, “leads to death, it is death. The result of this is that we cannot *please* God,” Paul says.

Now, the word *please* is a wonderful study in and of itself that some of you will run with this week I hope. Don’t have time to develop it here. But I want to peel back a little bit about pleasing God. There’s something innate in all of us that would like to be approved. My dad came from a very difficult background. His parents, classic Depression story. My grandfather worked as a school janitor for \$10 a month. They lived in a very tiny house, three boys, one bathroom that you could barely turn around in. And, my father’s view of life was heavily affected by those Depression years and how he looks at life.

And, I can hear my dad telling the story about the first time anyone approved of him. I’ve heard it a lot of times. The first time anyone said something good and encouraging to him, and it was, “Why don’t you go to college?” And, for whatever reason, that glommed onto his soul. Maybe I should go to college. Something people didn’t do in those days. And, his entire life really started a trajectory because someone approved of him and encouraged him. And so, as we all do, we take our grandparent’s and parent’s baggage and we move ‘em over, and they become our emotional inheritance, and then we have to take ‘em on.

And, I marvel at the things in life. You have them too. The defining moments were people have approved of you or encouraged you, and you’ve made a defining decision because of that, right? I think innately that tells us a great deal about longing for someone’s approval. I mean, who wants to live their whole life being disapproved of? I’ll sign-up for that. Hate me all your life, tell me I’m stupid, dumb, can’t do anything good all my life; I’ll be happy. No. We want to hear those words that Jesus transfers, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” We long for somebody to approve. Who better than God? Perhaps it is instilled in the soul of men and women that we long for the approval of God. And, Paul says, “If your mind is still in the flesh, you cannot *please* God nor will you hear His approval.”

I know it’s hard to hear that either we’re rightly related to Christ or we’re hostile toward God, but that is really the truth of Scripture. Well, I remember before I was a Christian, vividly in religious systems thinking, you know, I’ve done a lot more good than some people have done; and, I certainly haven’t done as bad as some people have done. I haven’t murdered, or raped, or plundered, or extorted anyone. I don’t do those big, bad sins. The little ones maybe. Not the big ones. And, I remember distinctly before I knew Christ thinking that when I died I hope all the good things I had done meant something in God’s perspective. Paul says, “The mind set on flesh is hostile. We’re enemies of God and leads to death.” So then, it leads to say well, God is unfair. God is uninvolved in human affairs of men and women. God is

not doing what I think He should be doing. We're back to the circle. I would do a better job being God than God.

Well, before we look at some better news, some good news, let me show you Paul's structural argument here. What he is saying is the mindset on flesh is flesh. The mindset on spirit is spirit. The mindset on flesh leads to death. But the mindset on the spirit leads to life and peace. Now, just stop there. Would you rather have death or life and peace? That's not a hard decision to me. Eternally separated from God on this death thing or life and peace with God, and hearing the pleasing words of God. Explanation of all this, Paul says, "The flesh is hostile toward God, but if we're in Christ, we have life and peace." The flesh is hostile, it cannot *please* God.

Let's look at the good news, which is much more fun, in Verses 9, 10, and 11. Follow and read with me. "However, you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed, the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But, if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you." So, it's impossible to please God in the flesh; however, however, in the spirit, we not only please God, but we find the indwelling person of the relationship with Him in us.

So, the strength of His power; Verses 9-11. This is a clear-cut distinction. The first two words of your English text, however you, those who were set on the flesh are death and separated from Christ. But you, if you know Christ, if you've trusted Him, if you've believed in Him, if you had an encounter with Christ, you have moved from the realm of death into the realm of life. And, this passage says the Spirit of God dwells in the believer.

Now, I want you to notice a number of interchangeable ways Paul talks about the Holy Spirit and these three verses. In Verse 9, the first part, he refers to Him as the Spirit. In the second strophe he refers to Him as the Spirit of God. In Verse 10, the first strophe, he simply says, "If Christ is in you." And then, in Verse 11, two times, the first time, "The spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead." And, in the last part, "His spirit who dwells in you." Now, I want to sort of labor this. I mentioned a couple, last Sunday, that we will find the Holy Spirit mentioned more in this chapter than any other chapter of the Bible. Paul's New Testament teaching here is laden with the Holy Spirit. Why does he use all these different ways of describing Him? Just for variety for the reader's sake? I think he's emphasizing the importance, the crucial nature of understanding God's Spirit and he interchanges the words to make the reader listen, to hear, to think differently about the Spirit of God.

We've often said in the last few decades that we are -- you know, the Holy Spirit of God is sort of the orphan. We don't really know that much about Him, and who He is, and what He does in our lives. This section is very clear about the Trinitarian Doctrine. That is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three distinct persons, one true God, and what the Trinitarian Doctrine teaches. Now, a Trinitarian Godhead is taught all through Scripture you will not find the word Trinity in the Bible. That is a true fact. But it is taught nonetheless. God's Spirit, God's Son, God the Father; are used multiple times, Old and New Testaments, to teach this.

In this particular passage one of the little doctrinaire things I want to talk about is why does Paul jumble these up and use them? Number one, I think he is showing that the indwelling Spirit of God equates with the indwelling Spirit of Christ, equates with the indwelling Holy Spirit. In other words, he is saying that they're equal. He interchanges the words, the function. They work as the same. So, what's Paul doing here? He's reminding us look, the Holy Spirit is God. He's not a little god, He's not the whooo God, He's not the Holy Ghost God; He is God and He's part of the Trinitarian Doctrine.

I have often maintained that the clearest passage in the whole New Testament on the Trinity is found in First Corinthians 12, Verses 4, 5, and 6. You ought to jot it down. Read the passage with me. There's no clearer passage in my opinion to teach the Trinity. Read it with me. "Now, therefore, there are varieties of gifts, but the *same* spirit. And, the varieties of ministries, but the *same* Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the *same* God who works all things in all persons." Now, how do you get around three distinct persons here? Same Spirit, same Lord Jesus, same God the Father. How do you get around that? And, it's fascinating. He uses the word *same, same, same*.

[Gauger:] You know, as a follower of Jesus Christ we are saved and there's no question that as you pointed out, the Spirit dwells in us and is supposed to control us. But yet, our experience sometimes indicates otherwise.

[Easley:] My experience often tells me otherwise, Jon, and it's, again, in a larger context, of what Paul is developing. There is a constant spiritual struggle we're going to have. Before we come to Christ that struggle is there, as well. Once we trust Christ we are heightened in our sensitivity to these things. And, this is, indeed, the crux of the spiritual life; being controlled by His Spirit, growing more in His image, growing more in a sanctification process. And, that's why I love the floor maintainer illustration because you can't control that thing in your own flesh, but you can learn to let it control you in the way it's being used.

[Gauger:] You know, I think of people who maybe have a two-flat they rent out part of their home. You know, they give an awful lot of thought to who's dwelling there, who lives there. There are evidences. I wonder if as followers of Jesus, though, we simply don't think enough about the Spirit who does dwell in us.

[Easley:] We don't. And, again, many churches, and I would be one to concede, we don't teach enough on the Holy Spirit's work in our life, and we fear the excesses of it in some churches, in others we teach incorrectly; but to have a good biblically-grounded view of the Holy Spirit's work in our life. And, the best word to me when you distill it all down is control. Who is going to control you? And, I would say every Christian, every believer, who is listening to you and me right now knows that when you rest and when you stop, and when you pause and you ask God's Spirit to help you He will whether it's a sexual temptation, whether it's an anger temptation, whether it's, you know, covetous, greed, avarice. When that stuff creeps up the back of your neck and into your brain, you start playing with those thoughts, if you stop and you say, "God, as the Spirit indwells me, my Comforter, One who walks along with me, will You help me be controlled by Your Spirit and not my flesh, my lusts, my desires, my sin nature?" And, God honors that prayer, but we just don't, you know, take a breath often enough to say, "God, help me by the power of Your Spirit."

[Gauger:] You know, this conversation reminds me of an email we received recently from Rich who says, "I've been a Christian for 23 years and until this day I have battled my sins of overeating, fear, and unbelief. I have ordered this 7-CD set of Romans and hoped that Romans 6:12-14 will become true in my life. Thank you, by the way, for your current series in Romans." That's a great word, Rich, and we appreciate your honesty there; and, we pray that God will use this series in your life as it has in mine. You know, Romans, the 7-CD set, is available at our website for your purchase. Our website address is [www.proclaim.mbn.org](http://www.proclaim.mbn.org). Think of it, 14 messages on 7 compact discs, yours right now at the website, [www.proclaim.mbn.org](http://www.proclaim.mbn.org). And, as always, we welcome your letters at [proclaim@moody.edu](mailto:proclaim@moody.edu), [proclaim@moody.edu](mailto:proclaim@moody.edu).

I'm Jon Gauger on behalf of our Teacher, Michael Easley, saying thanks for listening and hope to see you Tuesday here on *PROCLAIM!*