

Romans 8: Indwelling Spirit
04-30-17 PM

The teaching of the manner in which the Spirit dwells in a believer is one where there is a great deal of confusion. Many do not understand what “indwelling (a word not used in many translations) means, and they do not understand what it is meant to accomplish.

Romans 8 deals with the work of the Spirit in the believer, and gives us two ideas to this concept. First, the Holy Spirit dwells in a believer. Second, the Holy Spirit works apart from a believer on his or her behalf. Let us consider here first in Romans 8:1-18 how the Holy Spirit dwells in a believer. We will consider four points here.

1. In Romans 8, it might be simplified to say that the Holy Spirit and the Law of Christ are the same thing. They are the same in their presence and their work – to make a believer spiritual and alive. Consider verses 2 and 10 as parallel passages: in one verse we are told it is the Law of the Spirit of Christ that makes us alive; then in verse 10 we are told that it is the Spirit that makes us alive. In John 6:65 we are told that the words of Jesus are Spirit and are life. Thus, the idea of the Spirit in us is the same as the idea of the Law of Christ in us. When we are baptized into Christ, we receive that gift of life (the gift of the Holy Spirit). We put on a new man (Colossians 3:10-14) and walk in a new way. This is done by the indwelling of the law of Christ in the new man.

2. Therefore, we can see that the law of Christ / Holy Spirit dwells in us by Faith (as defined in Romans 10:17 and James 2:26 – that which comes by hearing and acting on the word of God). By dwelling in Faith, we understand that His presence as the Law of Christ is one which comes by the word of God, and impacts us in the same manner. At the same time, we know that He does not dwell in us in a manner contrary to faith (not by sight/senses; not by signs / miracles; not by human revelation).

3. His control over us is meant to be contrasted with the control that sin once had over us. In Romans 7:16-20 we are told that we acted on sin and did what it purposed in us. We obeyed sin and were slaves of sin. This is the same manner in which the Holy Spirit acts in us. We act on the revealed purpose of God (again, consider the new man) and become slaves to Jesus Christ. This mind of God is spiritually discerned, meaning it is only revealed by inspiration (2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore, living in the will of God is living by the Spirit, or spiritual living.

Conclusions: when we abide in Christ spiritually, Christ abides in us spiritually.

When the Spirit dwells in me:
- I am living by the Word of Truth

When I live by the Word of Truth
- The Spirit dwells in me

John 15:4
"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me"