



## The Hope-Filled Mind Set on the Spirit

### Grace Reigns: God's Gospel for All Peoples Series #41

Romans 8:5-11

David Sunday

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We're going to be looking at Romans 8:5-11. Let's read them together:

*<sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

*<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> 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.*

I want to focus today on verse nine: *"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."*

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we thank You that we who are in Christ Jesus have been freed from condemnation, and because of the work He has done for us we are now indwelt by Your Spirit, Father, so we can know from deep within that we are children of God. We are no longer enslaved to fear, to the sin that would have destroyed us. We are welcomed in Your embrace and able to call to You, "Abba, Father." We thank You for the precious gift of Your Holy Spirit living in us, and we pray that we would get to know Him better as we go through this wonderful chapter in

these next few weeks. We pray that we would cultivate companionship with Your Holy Spirit and experience more fully His sanctifying ministry in our lives. For the glory of Jesus we pray.

Amen.

“Just do the very best you can.” How many times has someone given you that advice? Maybe as you graduated from high school, your parents—looking forward to whatever was in the future for you—may have pulled you aside and said, “Listen. This is all we expect from you: just do the best you can.” Or maybe you were taking music lessons and it was time for your recital. Your teacher could tell you were really nervous, so she said, “Don’t worry. Just do the best you can.” Or you’re on a team trying to win the game and before the game the coach says, “Do the best you can!”

Sometimes it’s really liberating to know that someone isn’t expecting perfection—just a good effort. But sometimes, when you think about that—or at least when I think about it—I think, “Really? Do I have to do the best I can all the time? What if I’m exhausted? What if I can’t do the best I can? What if the best I can do is actually pretty pathetic?” Is this really hope-giving advice: “Just do the very best you can”?

The reason I bring that up today is because I think we sometimes think about the Christian life that way. We think about the good news—what we heard about last week—that God sent His Son to condemn sin in the flesh so that we might be liberated from the condemnation of our sins. *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* We say, “Oh, that is a breath of fresh air. That takes the pressure off. That’s good news!”

But now that we’re living the Christian life, sometimes we can fall into this trap of thinking, “I just have to try really hard to do the best I can do to live a holy life.” And often we feel frustrated’ we feel like failures. Roman 8 wants to give us good news—the good news that the Christian life is not about trying hard to do the best we can do. The Christian life is about God replacing the best we can do with the best He can do.

That’s the main point of this passage: God comes to live in us by His Holy Spirit so that we’re not left to just try to discipline ourselves to be better Christians, better people. The life of God has come to live in our souls. He dwells in us by His Spirit so that we can fulfill the righteousness that God requires of us and desires from us. He hasn’t left us just to do the best we can do. He has come to live in us by His Spirit.

What I hope to do in this sermon is encourage you that you have a Helper, a Counselor, the Comforter, the Keeper, a Friend in the Holy Spirit, Who is in you to empower you, enable you, enliven you, renew you, comfort you when you fail, and to help you persevere in this life of following Jesus. I want to help you get better acquainted with this Friend, the Holy Spirit, Who

lives in you. I want us to understand, too, that the Spirit comes to exercise a powerful influence over our lives. He comes to bring about a transformation in us.

### **Focus on the Holy Spirit's Work in Your Thought Life**

I want us to focus on the primary place where the Spirit is working to transform us: in our minds, our thinking. The Bible doesn't talk a lot about the brain. In our day and age we think about the brain as the control center of a person. But the Bible talks about the mind, or heart, as a place from which everything about us flows. The heart/mind is what controls our actions and desires, our behavior and our convictions.

The Holy Spirit comes into our lives and when He does, He begins working on the control center. He begins reprogramming the thoughts of our minds. We see in verses five through eight that this is so urgently important for us to understand. In these verses we see that there's an invisible line that divides the world, a line that passes through the minds of people. There are two mindsets that are operating in the world today—just two—and they're diametrically opposed to each other.

Verse five: *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit."* So in the world today there's this invisible line dividing all of humanity. There are those who are under the control of the flesh and those who are under the control of the Spirit.

What Paul is telling us here is that our identity is not primarily marked by things like our sexuality or ethnicity or nationality, our rank at work, our academic status—all these superficial distinctions the world uses to identify people. Rather, there is a fundamental distinction that separates all humanity: those who are of the mind of the Spirit, and those who are of the mind of the flesh. This is how all of humanity is divided. This is how even this congregation is divided. We are either under the mindset of the Spirit or under the mindset of the flesh.

What does this mean—the flesh? Sometimes we think of flesh as the skin and muscle that covers our bony skeletons. That's our flesh. That's not what Paul is talking about here. Sometimes the flesh is a way of describing our bodily instincts and appetites. But that's not totally what Paul is talking about here either. When he speaks of the flesh, he is describing humanity as we are apart from God's grace. He is describing humanity centered on self, going our own way, not depending on God, not seeking to do God's will.

The ESV Study Bible describes it well:

To set the mind on the flesh means to think continually about and to constantly desire the things characteristic of fallen, sinful human

nature. That is, to think just the way the unbelieving world thinks, emphasizing what it thinks is important, pursuing what it pursues, in disregard of God's will.

So there is a whole category of people who are thinking continually about and constantly desiring things characteristic of fallen, sinful human nature. They are desiring things that only the world can offer them, that only the world can give. Their treasure is completely in this world that they can see and touch and feel. That's the mindset of the flesh.

Then there's the mind set on the Spirit. This refers to a person who is under the control of the Holy Spirit, who is preoccupied with things the Holy Spirit treasures, who is looking to the Holy Spirit and His desires. This mindset will result in the Holy Spirit bring your satisfaction and our reward. These are the two ways to live. There's not a third way to live, Paul says. You're either living according to the flesh, setting your mind on the things of the flesh, or you're living according to the Spirit, setting your mind on the things of the Spirit.

And when he talks about "setting your mind" here, he's not talking about just something intellectual. He's talking about your whole mentality, what you dwell upon, what you like and don't like, what you respect and admire, what you're aspiring for, what you desire out of life. What's absorbing your thoughts and interests? What's the purpose of your life?

There are two contrary mindsets here. One is the Holy Spirit-controlled mindset, where you like what the Spirit likes and do not like what He doesn't like, respecting and admiring and desiring out of life what the Holy Spirit desires for you. He's the One Who is absorbing your thoughts, interests, affections and your purpose. Otherwise all these things you're seeking are contrary to what the Spirit has, and are what this world has to offer. These are the two ways to live and Paul says a Christian is one who is preoccupied with the things of the Spirit.

That seems kind of abstract to me. So I want to work out what we should be preoccupied with as we look at the rest of Romans 8, drawing out some of the things the Spirit is really interested in doing in our lives and in the world. Follow with me as we scan Romans 8 for the references that tell us what the Spirit is preoccupied with in this chapter.

We first see it in verse 11: *"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."* This is something the Spirit is committed to doing for those in whom Christ dwells. We're carrying around death in our bodies. Our mortal bodies are decaying and dying. But the Spirit of God is beginning a work in us that He's going to see through to completion until we are finally resurrected in glory and become like Christ. So the Spirit is preoccupied with giving life to our mortal bodies at the resurrection. That's good news.

Let's look at another thing the Spirit is preoccupied with in verse 13: *"For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."* Next week Pastor DeHaan is going to preach for us from this passage, so I won't steal his thunder right now. I'm just tracing some of the things the Spirit is concerned about doing.

Just keep this in your mind: the Spirit of God is committed to helping me mortify, to put to death, the sinful deeds of the body. God has not left me on my own just to do my very best to kill sin in my life. He's given me the Holy Spirit, Who is committed to my sanctification, and the Spirit of God will give me power to put to death my sinful desires. That's good news. I'm not left to myself in sanctification. The Spirit is preoccupied with sanctifying me.

Now look at verse 14. What else is the Spirit preoccupied with? He's preoccupied with leading and guiding God's dear children. *"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."* Then in verse 15, He's preoccupied with removing that fear of rejection that makes us wonder, "Am I really a child of God? Does God really love me?" He's preoccupied with cultivating within the hearts of believers this strong assurance that you are God's child. So you cry, "Abba! Father!" Verse 15: *"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."*

Then down in verse 23, as creation groans for the consummation of all things—as this broken world is crying out for redemption—we read, *"Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we are saved."* So the Spirit of God is preoccupied with helping believers groan for glory, making us dissatisfied with this world and the limitations of what this broken world has to offer. He helps cultivate within us longings for the new creation, for the return of Christ and the glory we will share. The Holy Spirit is preoccupied with keeping that hope alive in our lives and in our hearts.

Finally in verses 26-27, here in our weakness the Spirit helps us. *"We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."* Many days we find ourselves just at a loss. "How do I even express myself to God? How do I come to my Father and tell Him what I need? What do I say? How do I go on in this weariness?" The Spirit intercedes for us. He's groaning. He's taking our feeble requests and presenting them to the Father.

These are some of the things the Spirit cares about in Romans 8. So to set our minds on the Spirit means that we become preoccupied with things like this, like the fact that heaven is real. That's good news. It means that we become preoccupied with the fact that resurrection is

coming, that holiness is beautiful and desirable. Our Father in heaven loves us and accepts us and leads us in ways of righteousness. He welcomes us into His presence through prayer.

If you are a believer, you are familiar with this precious ministry of the Holy Spirit. You are experiencing this every day of your life. The Spirit of God is active in you, doing these things in you. He's changing the way you think. He's influencing your mindset. It's a beautiful realization to know that I'm not alone—God Himself has come to dwell in me. He is working and exerting His mighty, powerful, beautiful influence over my life.

We see in verse six that these two different ways of thinking, these two different mindsets, have eternal consequences. This isn't just theoretical. This invisible line, that divides humanity between those who mind the Spirit and those whose minds are controlled by the flesh, pulses with this message: "This is life and death. This is urgent."

If right now your mind is under the control of the flesh, what God can do for you is give you new life and bring your mind under the control of the Spirit. He can take you out of this way that is death. As Paul says in verse six, "*To set the mind on the flesh is death.*" He can bring you into life and peace. "*To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*" Do you see what a stark contrast there is between these two mindsets?

Some of us should probably be a little unsettled by these words. We really should be asking ourselves, "Do I see this characteristic in me—that my mind is being controlled by the Spirit?" This is really what it means to be a Christian. This is what makes a Christian different from the world. And we should be unsettled if we don't recognize this spiritual mindset in us, if it seems to us that what we're really living for is everything this world has to offer, and we think very little of the things that the Spirit wants us to think about. We should be unsettled.

You know, it's possible to come to church week after week after week and still have a mindset controlled by the flesh. It's very possible. Just coming to church doesn't mean you have a Spirit-controlled mindset—does it? I mean, the devil wants you to think that it's fine. "Just go to church and have your little slice of Christianity. After all, a little bit of religion never hurt anyone." That's the devil's mantra. He's fine if we come and stay half awake for an hour and 20 minutes. And if that's all the effect it has on us, the devil doesn't care.

You can be very fleshly minded and come to church religiously. You might even come to church and enjoy it—and still be fleshly minded. How can that be? Well, maybe you're attracted to the outward performance of things. You're just kind of coming and looking. "How eloquent is the preaching? What does the music do for me? How impressive is the ceremony?" That's just a fleshly mindset. That's not looking to the Spirit to cultivate in you love for the God Who's being preached about and sung about and worshipped here.

Maybe you're satisfied by going to a church service because you sense you've done your duty. And it makes you feel a little less guilty about some of the bad things you've done this week because you went to church on Sunday. That way of thinking is death, not life and peace. Maybe you think you're earning some credit with God by being here. That is just trying to construct your own righteousness before God. That's the way of death, not life. That's not peace in Christ. Or maybe you're coming to church because you enjoy thinking, "Hey, I'm better than other people—better than that immoral world out there—because I go to church." That's death, not life and peace.

The point I'm trying to make is it's possible to be religious and still be under the control of the flesh. You can be thinking about all we're doing here in a merely human sort of way. The mind that's controlled by the Spirit is different than that. As the Spirit-controlled mind is going through religious devotions and worship, the heart is being lifted up to God, saying, "Oh, God, my Father! Oh, Jesus, my Savior! Oh, Holy Spirit, knowing You is life."

You find yourself desiring God like a desert traveler who finds an oasis when you come to worship Him. You find in your heart longings to know and obey and live for this God Who is being revealed to you in His Word. That's what the Holy Spirit is doing in the mind of a believer as we come to worship. For the fleshly mindset, everything we're hungering for and enjoying can easily be found outside of God's Word and outside of God's church. But for the Spirit mindset, this is life itself: to be in fellowship with God and to be experiencing and energized by the things of His Word. It brings peace.

Ray Ortlund, looking at verses seven and eight, says something very profound: "There is no hope for the mentality of the flesh—no hope. It cannot be improved. It must be replaced, because it offends God." God's not saying, "Oh, fleshly-minded one, just be a little more spiritual here." He's saying, "Your whole way of thinking offends Me. It must be rooted out. It must be replaced." Jesus said something similar to Nicodemus, a religious man, "You must be born again" (John 3:3). Jesus was speaking of all humanity here. Naturally—in our flesh—we cannot see God. We cannot experience the things of God. We need new life. We need the Spirit to make us new.

Look at what verse seven says about the mind of the flesh: "*The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.*" Wow. That is pretty severe. There are a lot of people in the world who think, "Well, yeah, I'm not particularly interested in the Bible or in Christianity, but I'm not hostile to God. I believe God. I like God. I'm for God." But what we have to ask ourselves is this: is the God I think I like the God of the Bible, or is he a god of my own imagination? Is he a god I can control; a god who fits really comfortably into my worldly life? Is he a god who will never

demand much of me, who will be happy with whatever little bit I give him of my life, a god who is perfectly happy and satisfied with me as long as I'm doing the best I can? Is that the god you believe in?

Paul says we are hostile to the God of the Bible, because the God of the Bible demands everything from us. He is sovereign over our lives. He has a law—a rule of life—that He wants to transform every part of us from the inside out. In verse seven Paul says, "*The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*" The mind set on the flesh never says to God, "Not my will, but Yours be done. I want to go Your way. I don't want to think my own thoughts. I don't want to just map out my own life, to do whatever I want. God, I want to submit my desires to You, my ambitions to You, my finances to You. My attitudes, my words, my conduct, my sexuality—every part of me I want to be pleasing to You."

The mind set on the flesh does not submit to God's law. It says, "I want it my way." And it's determined to "have it your way." But the mind set on the Spirit says, "Oh, God, Your way is best and brings life and peace." Verse eight says, "*Those who are in the flesh cannot please God,*" because there's no pleasure in God for those who are in the flesh. They don't find any pleasure in God. They cannot please God.

So there you have it. Paul says there's this invisible line. There are two humanities here. Not three. There aren't ungodly people and really, really godly people—and then most of us, who are just kind of swimming around here in the middle. No, you're either in the flesh or you're in the Spirit. And Paul is saying, "This is who a Christian is. A Christian is someone who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and this is evidenced by the way he or she thinks—their mindset."

Graduates, it's really important that you understand that there's a battle for your mind going on—a huge battle. It's important to understand that this passage is here to encourage you. If you are a believer in Jesus with a mind that is submitted to God's law—a mind that says, "God, I want to take all my thoughts and make them obedient to Christ; I want to take everything I'm hearing and learning, and I want it to go through the filter of Your Word"—be encouraged that that mindset is a way of life and peace. There is blessing in taking all you're learning and all you're thinking and saying, "God, I want this to be filtered by Your Word." That's the way of life and peace.

But I hope you can also see that it's not possible to keep your mind in neutral as you go through this world. You can't coast through college and just let your mind be molded and shaped by every idea you hear. You're going to be hearing a lot of ideas and a lot of those ideas are pandering to your flesh. They're pandering to the idea that you can live independently of God

and that you can define your identity apart from Jesus Christ and the truth of His Word. God's Word is very clear that if you give yourself over to that way of thinking, it ends in death. It's death now, and it's eternal separation from God later.

God wants you to understand that your mind is not a blank slate. It's being shaped and influenced all the time—either by the flesh, the sinful nature, or by the Spirit of God. And the way to have your mind influenced by the Spirit of God is to put yourself under the teaching of God's Word. Listen to Romans 12:2: *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”* We need that continual renewal of our thinking, *“...that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* That's how a Spirit-minded person thinks. “God, I want to know Your will in this situation. I want to know what is good and acceptable and perfect in Your eyes.” Graduates, I encourage you to submit your mind to the law of God, the teaching of God in His Word, and ask the Holy Spirit to fill your thinking.

So in verses five through eight we see these two ways that divide the whole world.

### **Focus on the Holy Spirit's Assurance & Encouragement**

Now I just want to ask: why is Paul telling us this? What's the effect he wants this to have on the lives of believers? Is he telling us this for our assurance, or is he telling us this to call us to examine ourselves? What I want to say, from verse 9-11, is that Paul is mainly telling us this for our assurance. Do you notice that? Romans 8 is all about assurance. What is the first verse of Romans 8? *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* It doesn't get any more assuring than that, does it?

Then how does Romans 8 end? Nothing in all creation can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. So this is a strong chapter of assurance. Paul wants us to know that we're free from condemnation. Our sin will not destroy us, because Christ has dealt with our sin in our place. He wants us to know that our suffering in this life is going to end in glory. He wants us to be encouraged that God Almighty is so committed to us that He has come to live in us by His Holy Spirit, and through that assurance He wants us to keep on persevering. He wants you to be encouraged that the Spirit of God does live in you, if you're a believer in Jesus. You're not being left to just muddle through. You're indwelt and empowered by God Himself.

I want you to notice something about how Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:9-11. What's the first name he gives to the Holy Spirit in verse nine? He calls Him *“the Spirit of God.”* Then what does he call Him in the second part of verse nine? *“The Spirit of Christ.”* And

then in verse ten, Who is in us? Christ is in us. Then in verse 11, what does he call the Holy Spirit? *“The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.”* So He's the Spirit of the Father too!

You might be thinking, “Paul, are you trying to confuse us here? What are we supposed to call the Holy Spirit? The Spirit of God? The Spirit of Christ? Or the Spirit of the Father?” Paul says, “Take your pick—because He's all of the above.” The Spirit is one with Christ. He's one with the Father. He's fully God. And what Paul wants you to know is if you have the Spirit living in you, it's as if you have Jesus Himself with you and in you to empower you and to change you. The same Spirit Who filled Jesus to live the beautiful, holy life Jesus lived now fills you to make you less like your sinful self and more like your sinless Savior. You are indwelt by the same Spirit Who filled Jesus Christ. You have the presence of Christ within you. That's a strong assurance.

Verse nine: *“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”* It's impossible to be a Christian and not have the Spirit of Christ in you. Paul makes that very clear. So there's assurance here. And there's assurance that the Spirit Who began this good work in you is going to complete it (Philippians 1:6). He's come to live in you, and He's come to stay. He's not going to give up until your mortal body is raised from the dust, and like Christ in His glorious resurrection body, the Spirit is committed to being with you until you are raised in glory. That's what verses 10 and 11 are all about. Paul wants you to be filled with hope, knowing that a resurrection is coming. The Holy Spirit is not going to give up until that day arrives for you, dear believer. Be comforted by that.

But there's also a note of self-examination that I think is very appropriate—a humble call to examine ourselves. Sometimes we think “no condemnation in Christ” means, “Okay. I'm just free to go and live however I please.” God's Word is very clear that “no condemnation” does not free you to live however you please. It frees you to live the way God pleases. It frees you to live in accord with God's will.

So humility calls us to examine ourselves. Does the Holy Spirit live in me? Do I see evidence of His presence in my life? And if we don't see evidence of His presence in our lives and in our thinking, we can call on God right now and say, “Oh, God, be merciful to me. My mind is controlled by sinful desires, just human desires. I don't think about You enough. I don't know that I have that life in me, and I pray, God in heaven, would You Who sent Your Son Jesus to die for my sins send Your Spirit into my life to give me life.” God will do that for you.

Ask yourself, “Is my mind set on the flesh or on the Spirit?” The test is not sinless perfection. We saw that very clearly in chapter seven. There is an ongoing struggle. You're going

to waver. You're going to sin. But if the Spirit is in you, the center of gravity in your life has changed. You find yourself coming back to God again and again. Your mindset is different.

When you go outside at night on a warm summer night and see the beauty of the earth, you find yourself saying, "O God, how beautiful You are!" You talk with Him through the day. You think about His Word. You're mindful of the fact that you're not alone. You're a child of God, and you have His presence in your life. Waking or sleeping, His presence is your life. You're thinking about Him when you wake up in the morning. You're thinking about Him when you go to bed at night. And that's the sweet reality of what it means to be a Christian. God is in your thoughts. You know Him. You love Him, and you want to know Him better.

I love how the Puritan John Owen described what it's like to be spiritually minded:

We can test ourselves by asking whether our spiritual thoughts are like guests visiting a hotel or like children living at home. There's a temporary stir and bustle when guests arrive—yet within a little while, they leave and are forgotten. The hotel is then prepared for other guests. So it is with religious thoughts that are only occasional.

They come and go, but your mind is not preoccupied with the things of God. It's actually kind of rare for you to think about God. Not so with one of God's children.

Children belong to their house. They are missed if they don't come home. Preparation is continually being made for their food and comfort. Spiritual thoughts that arise from true spiritual mindedness are like the children of the house—always expected, and certainly inquired for if missing.

That's the truth for a believer. We expect every day to be thinking spiritual thoughts. If those thoughts are missing, we're wondering what happened. We're inquiring for those thoughts. We're putting ourselves in a place before the Word and in prayer where our minds can be renewed. Because Christ is in us, and we are in Him, we want our mind to be dwelling on the things above where He is.

What happens when our mind is set that way? Our sinful selves become more and more like our sinless Savior. An old preacher said these words: "Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, He reveals Christ to the understanding, enthrones Christ in the affections, gives Christ the control of the will, endears Christ to the heart, glorifies Christ in the soul, and conforms the person to the lovely likeness of Christ."

Before God, I call you believers to examine yourselves. Can you say, "Truly, my life is being transformed and changed from within through the presence of the Holy Spirit of Jesus"?

Can you say, “Christ is becoming clearer in my understanding. Jesus is enthroned in my affections. I am gladly yielding the control of my will to Christ. Christ is dear to my heart. His glory is real and weighty and compelling to my soul. I can see that my personality is being conformed to the lovely likeness of Christ”?

That’s what the Spirit is doing in us. We long for this and we thank Him for this. We pray that this work of grace would accelerate in our lives for the glory of Jesus. So would you join me now in praying? First, I want to give opportunity for anyone who realizes, “My mind is set on the flesh. I need new life in Jesus,” to pray. If you recognize your need today for a Savior—if you recognize you need your mind changed and transformed—the Holy Spirit is here. He is ready to come into your life and transform you. I can lead you in prayer as you pray with me. Offer this as your prayer to God.

“O God, I have been blinded by my sin. I haven’t had ears to hear Your voice. I did not know Your love within, and I have no taste for the joys of heaven. That’s a description of what I’ve been like. But today, God, I’m awakening to You, and Your Spirit is speaking to my heart. I pray, God, by Your mercy, would Your Spirit give me life. Open the teachings of Your Word to me, and give me life and peace through the gospel of Jesus. Thank You that Jesus died so my sins could be forgiven and I could be free from Your condemnation. Thank You that Jesus is alive today to give me life.” If that is your prayer, just say from your heart now, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” He hears you and He is active.

Believers in Jesus, we long to be more spiritually minded. So let us pray, “O Lord, by Your Spirit would You reveal Christ to my understanding? Would You enthrone Christ in my affections, so that I love Him supremely and love all things through Him and for His glory? Would You give Christ more and more control of my will—not my will, but Yours be done, O God? Make Christ dear to my heart—dearer than anyone or anything. Glorify Christ in my soul, and conform my person to the lovely likeness of Your Son. May His fragrance be on everything I do. May His beauty rest upon me. May I more and more live in such a way that when people see me, they are reminded of You. We pray in Your name, Lord. Amen.”

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