

2157 - LIVING in the SPIRIT of CHRIST - Rom 8:9

In [1] we are told that there is **no condemnation** if we are **in Christ**. To be 'in Christ' is therefore **fundamental** to salvation/ and our eternal happiness! We must be 'in Christ'. Paul spoke of the **redemption that is in Christ** [3:24]. All of us **need** to be 'in Christ'! Paul actually **uses** the **concept** 'in Christ', **240 times!**

Now, if we are 'in Christ' then we **will have** 'the Spirit of Christ' and we **'belong** to Him'. Our text says *anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him!* We may say all we like about an experience we may have had, about our feelings, etc, but if we do not have the **Spirit** of Jesus Christ we do not belong to Him - no matter what we may claim. So **what is it** to have the Spirit of Christ? How can we tell if we, or anyone else has that Spirit?

In a few words, having 'the Spirit of Christ' means having the same **attitude, manner, mind-set, opinion** and **outlook** as Jesus had. It is to have the same **heart** and **interests** as He had. To have the same **values** and **ideals** as He had. Of course **not** to the **same degree**, but of the same essence. He was the loveliest man that ever lived. No one, not even His enemies, could deny that His **behaviour** was impeccable – His **kindness** and **thoughtfulness** was beautiful. What His enemies really hated was His **teaching**. It was the resultant consequences of His **teaching** which they found objectionable.

Now we have to say, that although Xns are born again and have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and although they are '**in Christ**', they are **not always controlled** by the Spirit of Christ. I am not talking about conversion – but the life that follows conversion, ie, **obedience** to, and walk with the Lord. Xns **can disobey** God! They can quench the Spirit! Sometimes Xns are the last people you should follow! They can one day follow the Spirit, and the next day follow the devil! One day Jesus **praised** Peter *Blessed are you Simon* - another day (not long after) He said *Get behind Me Satan!*[Mat 16:23]. The same person – but a different spirit was **controlling** Peter! Sadly Xns are not always **led by the Spirit** [14]. They are sometimes **controlled** by **themselves**, or the **devil**, and sometimes by the **Spirit**. Paul ***Do you*** *not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient*

slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin which leads to death, or of obedience which leads to righteousness? [Rom 6:16] He was saying they sometimes were controlled by themselves! *So for each of us the question is ‘**Who is controlling me**, right now? Is it **my own selfish** spirit? Is it the devil or Jesus?

So, as it is possible for Xns to *live according to the flesh* - lets look at what some of those **subtle sins are** which we must *put to death!* John Owen: ‘If we are not killing sin, sin is killing us’!

1. We do **not have** the Spirit of God when we **think we won’t fall** into a **certain sin**. We read of someone in the newspapers and say. ‘I would never do that’ - beware! That is **exactly** the thing to **watch!** *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall* [1C10:12]. Peter is a fine example of one who never thought he would deny Jesus! But he did. **Three times!** Are you honestly stronger than Peter? **Only** reason some men have not committed adultery is because they have **never met** Potiphar’s wife!! They don’t know what it is like to be tempted. They think it is easy to resist! Many, many adulteries were **never** planned, never **intended!**

If you think you are strong because you **have** resisted temptation **before** - beware! The God who **gave** you strength to resist sin in the past, might not come to your aid so readily if you are **unwatchful** and standing in your own strength! Remember good King Hezekiah *God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart* [2Chr32:31] – and he **failed** !

2. You are **not** led by the Spirit of God when you are **abusing your authority** and trying to **control people** – **because you have an agenda of your own!** When you are trying to get them **to do** what **you want!** * A person in ‘authority’, (teacher, parent, minister, older brother) can **manipulate** people for their own ‘political’ ends! Listen to Peter *To the elders among you, I appeal...be shepherds of God’s flock...not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock* [1Pet5:3]!

APP It is so easy to **abuse** our **position** of **authority** to get people to do what **we** want. *We who are strong have an obligation...not to*

please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please Himself [Rom 15:1]

Sadly this can happen in the **Church!** Look: *I hope...to send Timothy to you...I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. They all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ [Phil 2:20,21].* Paul experienced the **manipulation** of people!

3. When we are **impatient for vindication!** When we can't wait until Judgment Day to prove we were right! We want to be **seen** as right **now in public**, so all will know I was right! We are **angry** because no one sees that we are right. We don't have the Spirit of Christ if we are angry at God's **Providence!** They called Jesus '**mad**' but He did not seek vindication! Remember *do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God [1C4:5]* The man who can wait until Judgment Day is the man who has **faith**.

As far as we know **Joseph's name** was **never cleared** re Potiphar's wife! *God **may** want **you** to live all your life long, **unvindicated** before men! There are many people in **prison** today who are hoping there is a Day of Vindication. They will be!

4. We are not controlled by the Spirit when we are **fishing** for a **compliment!** When you drop a word into a conversation that **obliges** people to **comment** favourably towards you! When you seek **attention** and want to be **noticed/commended/congratulated!** You are asking people to re-direct their interest from whatever they were focused on, to yourself **because** you feel **worthy!** Again it is self-centredness a great sin in God's eyes.

SOLUTION is always: Focus on Jesus Christ. After mentioning Christ's sufferings we read *Therefore holy brothers...consider Jesus [Heb 3:1]* Think of Him and stop complaining. All of our grumbles and grouches should vanish when we *consider Jesus*.

We as a society are challenged a lot these days! We are seeing on TV and the media some awful cases of **injustice** and **corruption** and **wickedness**. It can be very challenging to our **worldview** that God is

ruling and has a purpose and plan of redemption and cleansing of all wickedness. Why does God **allow** such awful things to happen? Let us then remember that the **greatest injustice/wickedness** was His allowing and permitting the cruel death of Jesus. But He rose triumphant and conquered death and all evil (in principle) and which has yet to be manifested in history and in the *new heavens and new earth*

WHY DID Jesus Christ **empty himself** and *make Himself nothing?* [Phil 2:7] In order to be **filled** with **servanthood!** To be an **example** to us as to how we should live our lives in the Spirit. There are **5** words in Greek to describe servant - the one Paul chose for Jesus was *doulos* = means **bond-servant!** Many servants today talk of their **human rights** (even prisoners now talk of it!) Being a *doulos* meant almost lower than man, you were 'owned' lock, stock and barrel, his master could do with him whatever he wanted! Jesus X was *doulos*:

1. Was **willingly deprived!** Many today speak of being deprived in their youth and use it as an **excuse** for their misdemeanours! But Jesus **voluntarily deprived** Himself of **all** - He didn't have a **bed!** Jesus was a **homeless** person!

2. Jesus was **willingly discredited!** They **told lies** about Jesus *He is leading the people astray* [J7:12] They **misquoted** Him deliberately! That was hard to take. His holy, pure soul was willing to accept these **insulting lies** about Himself which **must have hurt** Him!

3. Jesus was willingly **degraded** *Then they spit in His face and struck Him. And some slapped Him* [Mat 26:67]. That's degrading! Yet Jesus was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The one great mark of a person with the Spirit of Christ is **humility!** To be **humbly led** by **superiors** to do whatever they require! Jesus did everything His Father wanted Him to do. In fact He **asked** His Father before He did anything! 'Is this what **You** want? Many Xns do not like being **told** what to do! Not so, Jesus Christ! *I can do nothing on My own...I seek not My own will but the will of Him who sent Me...+...I do nothing on My own authority, but speak just as the Father taught Me* [J5:30, 8:28] He prayed for guidance re everything