

**REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 8: 5 - 11**  
**PREACHED ON APRIL 19, 2026, BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER**

5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- Last week, as we considered verses 1 through 4, the apostle Paul told us about the freedom the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian. Before anyone became a Christian, that man and woman were held in chains because of their sins, and they were held in prison under the sentence of death. All humanity, by virtue of our union with Adam, and before becoming a Christian, is guilty before God, and there is absolutely nothing that mankind can do about that. Mankind cannot undo his or her sins, nor can we compensate for them.
- Earlier in chapter 7, Paul told us about what the Law of God wants us to do, and he also told us that we cannot do the very things the Law tells us to do. The unbeliever cannot obey the Law perfectly; he cannot stop doing evil, and the more he lives, the more he piles up guilt upon himself. However, in verse 3 of chapter 8, the apostle tells us that there is good news: God has acted in our situation. He wrote: "For what the Law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in the flesh."
- God has done what we could not do for ourselves, nor could we do for anyone. Christ has taken our place by suffering what we should have suffered. He had borne our condemnation on the Cross of Calvary. He has been punished for us. Not only that, He has kept the Law of God on our behalf, and He did so perfectly. The Holy Spirit joins us to Christ. He places us in Christ so that Christ's obedience and atonement are credited to us. The Christian is in a new permanent relationship with Christ, and the practical result of what Christ has done for us is that He sets us free from the guilt of sin and not only that, but from the bondage of sin and death.

- Death can no longer claim victory over the believer. We enter eternal life the moment we believe in Christ. Jesus said in John 5:24, “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” The believer has passed from death to life. What we call death in this world is actually an entrance of the believer to the very presence of God in all of eternity. Paul therefore declared that there is now no condemnation for the believer, not a single one or any kind of condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- Our guilt has been taken away, we have been forgiven, and we have been declared righteous. We have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ. If you are a Christian, you need to say to yourself every time that there is no condemnation to hell for you ever. You must remember always that God has unconditionally set His love upon you and has delivered you from sin's guilt, death, and bondage.
- Paul had told us in previous chapters that there are only two groups of people in this world: the Christian believer and the unbeliever. The Christian walks or lives according to the Spirit, while the unbeliever walks or lives according to the flesh, also called the sinful nature. In verses 5 through 11, Paul explains how the Holy Spirit distinguishes the true believer from the unbeliever. How can you tell who a true Christian is, and how do you know if you are a true Christian? What are the inward signs and outward signs that show whether you are in Christ or outside of Christ? Paul shows us that the Holy Spirit differentiates between the believer and the unbeliever.
- We will consider these verses under four points. First, we will look at the general distinction between the believer and the unbeliever. Secondly, we will look at what controls the believer and the unbeliever. Thirdly, we will consider what the believer and the unbeliever live for. Finally, we will consider the eternal destiny of both the believer and the unbeliever.

#### ➤ **GENERAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE BELIEVER AND UNBELIEVER**

- Paul wrote in verse 5, “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.”
- What outward signs differentiate the believer from the unbeliever? Paul says the answer lies in their way of life. You cannot tell who is a true Christian and who is an unbeliever or false Christian by the profession of faith they make. You cannot tell the difference between a true Christian and a false Christian or unbeliever by considering the denomination, church, or none they hold allegiance to. The only outward distinction is in the manner of their lives. It is the way they live that distinguishes the Christian from the non-Christian.
- There are some people who say, "Don't judge me by my actions," and what they mean is this: don't look at what I do or say, because even though I have this

pattern of behavior, that is not who I really am. Some even go so far as to say that I might act a certain way, but I am actually a spiritual person. However, Paul tells us that your walk, your behavior, shows who you are.

➤ **DISTINCTION BASED ON WHAT CONTROLS PEOPLE**

❖ **FIRST. WHAT CONTROLS THE UNBELIEVER OR FALSE BELIEVER?**

- In verse 5, Paul tells us that both Christians and non-Christians are controlled by something, and you will know whether someone is a Christian by looking at what controls them. The human mind can only be set in one direction—either toward sinful, fleshly cravings or toward those things that please God's Holy Spirit. A mind governed by the flesh lets the sinful nature have control. It prioritizes personal gratification over pleasing God. Such a mindset disregards God's guidance.
- The unbeliever is controlled by the flesh or the sinful nature. That person walks or lives according to the flesh. Fallen humanity is described as walking according to the flesh. The flesh refers to a life lived apart from the grace of God and the redeeming power of God in Jesus Christ. The flesh is everything we are apart from God's saving grace. It is the description of unredeemed and unregenerate humanity.
- A life controlled by the flesh is one where physical appetites dominate both one's mental and emotional life, as well as one's deepest sense of self. This manifests as a preoccupation with material concerns such as financial security, entertainment, career advancement, and bodily needs, rather than with kingdom pursuits.

❖ **SECOND. WHAT CONTROLS THE BELIEVER?**

- The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, controls the believer. The Spirit directs the life of the Christian believer. The mark of the Christian is the presence of the Holy Spirit in his or her life. Every true believer has a new resident, the Holy Spirit, living inside them. You don't receive the Spirit later after you have become a Christian. Anyone who doesn't have the Spirit is simply not a Christian; he or she doesn't belong to God. In verse 9, Paul wrote: "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ." To be in the Spirit is not a charismatic experience; it is not what Pentecostals call the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongue-speaking as the evidence; it is not an experience that super Christians attain.
- Immediately you become converted, a new resident, the Holy Spirit takes His residence in you. He dwells in you. Think about a man who buys a new house from someone who didn't take good care of the house he is buying. The previous

owner left the house in a very bad state. There is dirt on all the furniture, the grass has not been cut, the septic system is malfunctioning, and there are broken doors and windows. Most people knew the previous owner had left the house in a very poor state. The new owner doesn't want to keep the house in that terrible state, so he gradually starts cleaning it. He cut the grass, dusted the furniture, repaired the broken parts, installed a new septic system, painted the walls, and within a few days, the neighbors began to notice that the dirty house had a new owner because of the changes they saw.

- This is what happens when the Holy Spirit takes His dwelling in a person, a believer. Sin, the Devil, worldly pleasures, and the flesh left everyone in a terrible state. We cannot do any good even when we try. We are known for our dishonesty, adultery, idolatry, theft, disobedience to parents, hatred for God, among other things. However, when we are born again, the Holy Spirit, the new owner, takes His place in our lives and immediately, but progressively starts to work in us to clean the remnant of the sinful nature left in us by the previous owner, the Devil, sin, flesh, and worldly pleasures. A lot of work has to be done in us; in fact, we have a long way to go, but the Spirit progressively works in us. It is called sanctification.
- The Spirit progressively makes us more and more like Jesus Christ. With time, our family, co-workers, neighbors, and ourselves would begin to see changes in our actions, priorities, thoughts, speech, motives, etc. Because sin has affected every faculty of us, all the members of our being: our mind, heart, soul, lips, hands, feet, etc., it would take some time for our cleansing, and it is a lifelong work of the Holy Spirit. This ongoing work of the Spirit will continue until we depart this earth.
- There is an enormous change in the life of the converted man and woman. Paul wrote: "5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace."
- There is a change in orientation; they think differently, hold new values, perspectives, interests, and motivations. They give themselves to things they never thought of previously. Prayer becomes important to them, but it wasn't before. Meditating on the Scripture daily and applying its truth to their lives becomes a priority for them. Training their children in the fear of the Lord and in keeping their eyes on Christ is one of their goals. Loving their wives, submitting to their husbands, and fellowshiping with true believers become their interests. Honoring the Sabbath Day by worshiping the Lord becomes a priority. They are now interested in the advancement of the kingdom of God, like Paul, but he previously wanted to end Christianity.
- They set their minds on the things of the Spirit and on heavenly things. Paul had told the Colossian Christians to be heavenly-minded in Colossians 3:1-4. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where

Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

- In return for being heavenly-minded, the new owner of their life, the Holy Spirit, gives them peace and eternal life as stated in verse 6. The believer’s life is controlled by the Holy Spirit, always towards holiness, towards love for the things of God, and towards obedience to God. The Holy Spirit controls the person to become more and more like Christ. The terrible house left by the previous owner is now being renovated by the new owner, and it’s been cleaned and is becoming more and more beautiful. When the renovation has been completed, the new owner, God, the Holy Spirit, will present the true believers to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless, according to Ephesians 5:27.
- If you are a true believer and walk in the spirit, are these things true of you? Do you think about the day of your bodily resurrection? Do you think about the advancement of the kingdom of God? Do you think about how to obey God’s Law? Do you think about meditating on God’s Word and applying its truth to your life? Do you think about raising godly children whose eyes are on Jesus Christ and not on sports, music, and fashion? Do you think about entering into glory with Christ? Do spiritual things motivate you and play a major part in your daily activities?
- You cannot have earthly goals and turn around and say that you are walking in the spirit. It is only when your mind is taken up on heavenly things that you can say that you are walking in the spirit. Paul is telling us that sanctification begins in the mind and heart and then works out in the person's behavior.

#### ➤ **DISTINCTION BASED ON WHAT PEOPLE LIVE FOR**

#### ❖ **FIRST. WHAT DO UNBELIEVERS OR FALSE BELIEVERS LIVE FOR?**

- The difference between the believer and the unbeliever is what their minds are set on. The unbeliever lives for things with God excluded from his or her mind. The unbeliever lives like the animals, who are also flesh, live in the flesh, all they think about is the flesh, and do not have a spirit. Animals live for food, water, and shelter to sustain life. They live to reproduce and ensure the continuation of their lineage. Many animals form social bonds for cooperation, protection, and the nurturing of young. Animals adapt to their environments to enhance survival and reproductive success. Animals often explore their habitats to find resources and learn about their surroundings. Animals engage in instinctual behaviors that fulfill their basic needs and promote survival.
- Humanity that walks according to the flesh is not different from the animals. Unbelievers exclude God in their priorities and live for feeding, fighting, fleeing,

and mating. They focus on physical desires and pleasures rather than long-term fulfillment or spiritual growth. Their worldview lacks meaning beyond survival and self-interest. They are less concerned with consequences beyond earthly life and are always inclined to prioritize material possessions and success over spiritual values. 2 Peter 2:12 said it well about unbelievers. "But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish."

- The catechism of the non-Christian, the person who lives according to the flesh, includes: What do I eat and drink? What would I wear for clothes to look good? Where would I get money and more money? How can I find more fun? How can I store up more treasures on earth? All the focus of their mind is worldly things, material things, fleshly things, and things that satisfy bodily appetites. Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter 3, verses 18 and 19. "For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again, even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things."
- In verse 6, Paul says that the unbeliever is in a state of spiritual death. "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace." He or she is dead in his or her trespasses and sins. This death is a present reality. He or she is dead to the things of God, dead to the glory of Jesus Christ, unresponsive to the things the believer glories in. For example, two people might hear the Word of God at the same time from the same preacher. One person is overwhelmed by the Word, challenged to apply its truth to his life, and delights in sharing it with others, but the other person is not moved. He thought of the sermon as meaningless and a waste of time to hear. How do you explain this? The only reason is this: the first person is spiritually alive, and the other is spiritually dead.
- The new birth is a great distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian. The Christian has experienced the Holy Spirit raising him or her to a new life, but the unbeliever has not. The believer has a new heart, a new nature, a new master, but the unbeliever doesn't have any of these. In John 3:3, Jesus replied to Nicodemus, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." The believer is alive spiritually, and the non-believer is dead spiritually, meaning dead to God and the things of God, but might be alive to other things.
- All that drives the unbeliever in life is earthly things such as cars, houses, games, sports, vacations, promotions, food, music, fame, and selfish interests. However, Paul tells us that this fleshly mindset is at enmity with God and wicked towards God in verse 7. "The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." The mindset of the unbeliever is against the person of God, His existence, and His work. The hostility is towards God's will.

- Paul says the unbeliever is not passive but hostile to God, hates the teachings of Scripture. They wish God would let them alone so they could have their way. They wished God would not forbid any sins and judge the world. They do not, cannot, and will not submit to God's Law. They are in moral enmity against God. They say nobody is going to tell me what I should do with my life, so I need to be free. Paul says that mindset is a sign of spiritual death. They cannot submit to God because their sinful nature wants to please the flesh rather than submit to God. Then in verse 8, the apostle says, "Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God."

## ❖ **SECOND. WHAT DO BELIEVERS LIVE FOR?**

- The believer with a renewed mindset, on the other hand, is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. Nobody can have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him or her and live in the flesh. When God's Holy Spirit invades a life, one of the things He does is to change the issue of what the person lives for. That person might be a doctor, a lawyer, a very great man in the community, but his or her interest would not be in his or her career, but in Jesus Christ and the things of God. Last week, during our family worship, I told my children that my greatest desire for them, and that of their mom, is that they honor, obey, and serve Jesus Christ, not a successful career or anything else.
- The Holy Spirit sets goals and establishes priorities for the believer, but the unbeliever is controlled by the flesh, the sinful nature. What is your great interest in life? What are you living for this morning? The Holy Spirit, indwelling the believer, transforms the person with new desires to live according to the good pleasure of God. Where is the good pleasure of God found? It is in His Moral Law, the Ten Commandments. The Holy Spirit makes us have the desire to obey God's Law by writing God's Law in our hearts.

## ➤ **DISTINCTION BASED ON ETERNAL DESTINY**

### ❖ **FIRST. WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF THE UNBELIEVER?**

- The destiny of the man or woman who walks in the flesh till the end of his or her life is death, condemnation to hell, now and in all eternity, because the wages of sin is death. This will be the fate of so many people. Scripture teaches that many people will end up in hell rather than in heaven.

### ❖ **SECOND. WHAT IS THE DESTINY OF THE BELIEVER?**

- Paul writes: "11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you."

- The resurrection of the body at the second coming of Christ only comes to those who walk in the Spirit. Only men and women who walk in the spirit will experience the glorification at the second coming of Christ.
- Everyone who walks in the Spirit is a temple of God because the Holy Spirit lives in you, and He is working to transform you. The transformation would be completed when you are given a new body to honor God forever on the Last Day. The believer has every reason to rejoice and look forward to the resurrection of the body, the glorification, because Christ in you, the Holy Spirit in you, means the hope of glory.

➤ **APPLICATION**

- A question we must all ask ourselves is this: could we tell who owns our lives now? Could anybody tell who owns the house of my life? Could my family, friends, etc., tell who owns the house of my life? Is my house still owned by the flesh, or is it owned by God, the Holy Spirit?
- I want to conclude with a contrast between walking in the spirit and walking in the flesh from Galatians 5:16-26.
- 16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
- 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.
- Where do you belong? If you are still walking in the flesh, there is still an opportunity for you to come and walk in the Spirit. All true believers used to walk in the flesh. Paul, David, Abraham, Peter, John, and believers throughout the generations used to walk in the flesh, but their story changed when they heard this gospel, repented of their sins, and believed in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. What do you make of the gospel you have heard today? Do you still want to walk in the flesh and end up in hell, or do you want to flee to Jesus and start to walk in the Spirit?
- May the Lord bless His Word. Amen.