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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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Sinfully Minded vs. Spiritually Minded

Romans 8:5-8

I. A Radical Transformation

- A. Goal of Romans 8... Proving Romans 8:1
- B. Goal of Romans 8:5-13... proving Romans 8:4... “walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”
- C. Division of text:

Romans 8:5-8: Contrast between Christian and non-Christian

That we may be **assured** by the transformation already taken place... OR **warned** if it hasn't!!

D. Two Key Assertions

- 1. Paul is describing ALL Christians
 - a. no special classes of Christian... “carnal” vs. “spiritual”
 - b. no “second experience” necessary for fully obedient Christian life
 - c. distinction is between non-Christian and Christian... not immature Christian vs. mature Christian
- 2. Total transformation absolutely essential to salvation
 - a. contrast from non-Christian to Christian as distinct as darkness to light
 - b. radical change has occurred in you if you are a Christian

Lloyd-Jones: “Christianity involves a complete, radical change in the nature of the human being.”

II. The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit mentioned FOUR TIMES in first seven chapters of Romans... TWENTY TIMES in Romans 8 alone

John MacArthur: "The Spirit is to a believer what God the creator is to the physical world. Without God, the physical world would not exist. Without the Spirit, the Christian would not be a Christian."

A. The Gift Promised

1. Joel

Joel 2:28-29 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Came true on the Day of Pentecost

2. Peter

Acts 2:37-39 "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

The promise is for anyone who repents and trusts Christ... the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit

B. The Gift Described

1. The Person of the Holy Spirit

Not merely an influence, an impersonal power or force... like Star Wars: "May the force be with you" NO NO NO NO!!!

The "person" of the Spirit... with a mind, a personality, with purpose and plans, with passions and feelings

Third person of the Trinity, co-equal and co-eternal to the Father and the Son, being one essence with the father and the Son, He proceeds from them to His church

He has a mind, emotions, and a will; He loves his children, He communicates with them, teaches them, guides them, chastises them

He can be grieved, quenched, lied to, tested, resisted, and blasphemed

He is omnipresent, omnipotent, glorious and holy

He is therefore most frequently known as the Holy Spirit... but is also called the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Counselor, the Advocate and many other names

This Holy Spirit dwells within everyone of you who is a true believer in Jesus Christ

2. The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

vs. 9 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.*

C. The Gift Active

[focus in Romans 8] Guiding, leading, assuring, causing us to put sin to death, testifying to us that we are children of God, helping us through suffering, helping us in prayer

III. The Carnally-Minded Person

vs. 5 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*

A. Under (Therefore After) the Flesh: Position, Desire, and Lifestyle

1. Position: Enslaved to Sin... "in Adam, slave to sin & the devil"... no power to refuse
2. Result: MIND: Desire... the mind of the flesh
3. Result #2: Lifestyle of Sin

B. The Carnal Mind: Minding the Things of the Flesh

1. "Mind"

"Mind your own business" = think about, concentrate upon, be busily focused upon

2. Passion, Desire, Longing, Yearning
3. "Things of the flesh"

- a. "sins of the flesh"... substance abuse, sexual sins

b. term is MUCH broader than these alone!!!

Romans 1:28-31 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

d. 1 John list

1 John 2:15-17 Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, boastful pride of life

4. Worldly-minded

Illus. John Bunyan: "Worldly-mindedness"... in *Pilgrim's Progress* called it "Vanity Fair":

at this fair are all such merchandise sold as houses, lands, trades, places, honors, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures; and delights of all sorts, as harlots, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not. And moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind. Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false-swearers, and that of a blood-red color. Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town, where this lusty fair is kept; and he that will go to the city, and yet not go through this town, "must needs go out of the world."

a. not just open sins... but also attitudes and values

Trench: "The floating mass of thought, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations at any time current in the world."

b. extends to every area of human endeavor

- Political interests apart from God
- Social causes apart from God
- Cultural achievements apart from God
- Human philosophies, human art... human culture... human music... human literature: all apart from God

Illus.: Beethoven, "O Man, help thyself!!"... died during a weird storm and final act of shaking his fist at the sky

- Utopian dreams of perfect human society apart from God

Communism: Marx's ideal

All of this is evidence of the mind set on the flesh

Every aspect of life lived apart from God... **God excluded!!!**

Psalm 10:4 In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Life bounded by the body: the five-sense world is everything

Philippians 3:18-20 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven.

Poster child: Esau... living for today... living for the next meal... living for a beautiful woman... living for earthly esteem from his father... living for revenge against his brother... **WORLDLY-MINDED**

C. Carnally-Minded IS Spiritual Death

vs. 6 “The mind of the flesh is death...”

1. Not merely “Leads to death” but IS death
2. “Dead already”

Ephesians 2:1-2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air

Illus. John MacArthur, funeral for baby girl killed in a traffic accident; mother kept picking up lifeless body of the baby and crying over it and talking to it, caressing it... but there was no response; so is the carnally-minded person to the things of God...**NO RESPONSE**

Illus. William Wilberforce and William Pitt, Richard Cecil

“You know, Wilberforce, I have not the slightest idea what that man was talking about!!”

He was bored by it... he couldn't follow it... he could not understand what it was all about

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

SPIRITUALLY DEAD even while they live day after day... death now

“The carnal mind is death” “Dead in transgressions and sins even while we lived”

3. YET it DOES lead to a final death... eternal separation from God in hell

D. At War with God

vs. 7 the sinful mind is hostile to God

1. “Enmity” “Hatred” “Hostility”

Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds [as revealed by] your evil behavior.

2. Settled rebellion against the Holy Emperor of the World

3. They love a god they can fashion from their own imaginations

“I like to think of god as a loving tolerant father...”

“I like to think of god as a gentle caressing breeze...”

4. BUT they do not love the Holy Judge of the World

a. a God who can do what He wants with what He’s made

b. a God who dwells in unapproachable light

c. a God who reveals His wrath against sin every single day

d. a God who has the right to make laws and enforce them

This is the God of the Bible... and it is NOT the God they love... they fight against this God with every fiber of their being

Jean-Paul Sartre said “Even if the God of the Bible really did exist, we would have to create a philosophy that He did not exist so that we could merely survive and live life before Him”

E. Rebellious Against God’s Law

vs. 7 “It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”

Illus.: Pro-abortion bumper sticker... "Keep your laws off my body"

God's laws are all over your body... they even crawl into your mind and judge the thoughts and attitudes of your hearts

"You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor"

1. God's law utterly offensive
2. OR God's law merely irrelevant
3. "Submit" = obey like a soldier his commanding officer
4. IMPOSSIBLE for carnal mind to submit... the essence of the sinful mind is rebellion

Illus. Frank Sinatra: "I did it my way!"

- a. follow own tendencies, likes & dislikes
 - b. God's will in the matter is offensive or irrelevant
5. The carnal mind CANNOT submit to God's Law... but will only fight against it
- It shakes its fist at God and says "I'm going to fight you every step of the way!"
 - OR it ignores God with a bored shrug and says "I never really understood all that stuff anyway!"

F. Impossible to Please God

vs. 8 Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

1. Carnal mind inevitably results in life DISPLEASING TO GOD
2. TRAGIC!! We were created to please God
3. Tree and Fruit

Matthew 12:33-34 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.

This is precisely why no one can stand before God on Judgment Day on the basis of their own good works... they literally have none

Summary:

- Position: Under the flesh... subject to the authority of the flesh; spiritually dead
- Desire: After fleshly, worldly things... "Lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride of life"; hateful of spiritual things
- Lifestyle: Life of active rebellion or passive indifference to God... a life totally displeasing to God

IV. The Spiritually-Minded Person

A. Under (Therefore After) the Spirit: Position, Desire, and Lifestyle

1. Position: New realm of existence... was "In Adam", now "In Christ"
2. "In Christ" and "Under the Spirit" are same thing
3. Spirit has power and authority over you... He lives within you to rule your life
 - a. habitually dominated by the Spirit... regulated, controlled
 - b. Spirit prompts, you respond
 - c. Spirit leads, you follow in step
4. He transforms your heart to make it a new creation
 - New mind: "We have the mind of Christ"
 - New thought patterns
 - New passions and desires
 - New lifestyle as a result

B. The Spiritual Mind: Minding the Things of the Spirit

1. "Mind" = gravitational center of your existence are the things of the Spirit
2. "Things of the Spirit"... what they are not (merely)
 - Not merely religion

Some of the bitterest opponents of true Christianity have been religious people

Pharisees, John Hus, Martin Luther, Revival of George Whitefield

- Not merely right theology

Some can make a profession or a hobby out of orthodox doctrines, but be dead as a stone

- Not merely religious experience

Some people hanker after the dramatic experiences of revivals, miracles, manifestations, and movings... but have no taste for the true life of the Spirit

3. What ARE the “things of the Spirit?”

- 1) Intensely concerned about the SOUL
- 2) Intensely aware of personal SINFULNESS
- 3) Totally consumed with the PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST
- 4) Deeply absorbed in the WAY OF SALVATION
- 5) Yearning for growth in PRAYER
- 6) Hungry for true Christian FELLOWSHIP
- 7) Passionately concerned about EVANGELISM and MISSIONS
- 8) Summary: Deeply hungry for the BIBLE... the things of this BOOK!!!

C. Spiritually-Minded IS Spiritual Life

vs. 6 *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace*

1. Were dead in transgressions.... Spiritually dead before God
2. Jesus came to bring life to dead people

John 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 4:13-14 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

life = spiritual-mindedness

John 17:3 “Now this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

3. Justification immediately results in spiritual life

Romans 5:18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Union with Christ in His death and resurrection is basis of our justification before God

Christ's death is our death, Christ's life is our life

4. Life ALWAYS produces fruit

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 7:4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God.

Illus. Difference between Christmas tree fruit and living fruit

God searches our hearts to know our passion, our thoughts, our yearnings, the very center of our souls

The Christian has the mind of the Spirit... and this is the very essence of life

D. Spiritually-Minded IS Spiritual Peace

1. Peace = *shalom*... blessedness of a right relationship with God

Previously there was warfare, hostility, resistance, apathy, hatred toward God

Now there is peace, union, obedience, blessedness in a perfectly whole relationship with God

2. Justification produces this peace... all God's wrath atoned for through Christ

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

3. Peace with God, then peace of God

- a. "peace with God" = unchanging status of relationship with God
- b. "peace of God" = conscious sense of God's peace in our circumstances

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

"Guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus" = moment by moment experience of the peace of God... God's serene contentedness that His wisdom and His power are sufficient for every problem

The "mind of the Spirit" is life and peace... eternal life in union with God through Christ; eternal peace in right relationship to God and the possibility of the experience of peace in all the ups and downs of life

E. Pleasing to God

[Not mentioned in text but assumed]

- 1. Christ's person: God is totally delighted with His Son, Jesus Christ

Matthew 3:17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- 2. Christ's mind-set: constant passion to please His Father
- 3. Christ's performance: constantly lived to please His Father
- 4. Christian's person: God is totally delighted with all who are united with Christ
- 5. Christian's mind-set: Constant yearning to please God

2 Corinthians 5:9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

- 6. Christian's performance: Daily life pleasing God in obedience to His commands

1 John 3:22-23 we obey his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

V. Application

Diagnose Yourself

Has this radical transformation occurred to you?

Reverse Order:

- 1) Lifestyle: how do you live? How do you spend the resources of your life?
- 2) Desire: “Mind of the flesh” or “Mind of the Spirit”? Do you think constantly about the things of God or are you dominated by a desire after worldly things? What do you dream about? What is your ambition? What is your passion? Do the following consume you:
 - Intensely concerned about the SOUL
 - Intensely aware of personal SINFULNESS
 - Totally consumed with the PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST
 - Deeply absorbed in the WAY OF SALVATION
 - Yearning for growth in PRAYER
 - Hungry for true Christian FELLOWSHIP
 - Passionately concerned about EVANGELISM and MISSIONS
 - Deeply hungry for the BIBLE... the things of this BOOK!!!
- 3) Position: What does this say about your position before God?