

Sunday Celebration (March 22, 2009)
"Newness Means New Abilities"

Walking in Newness of Life (Pt. 8)

Ez 36:22-27 ... God's Future Plan to Vindicate His Name

1. **God's Sovereign Grace ...** (v. 22) "It is not for your sake that I am about to act..."
2. **Forgiveness for ALL our sins on the basis of FREE GRACE ...** (v. 25) "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean"

The N.T. believer is No Longer Under the Law, but Under Grace... However, being a Christian—Even under grace, would be INSUFFICIENT to bring about a Fruitful Walk

But forgiveness and cleansing is not enough. I need to be new. I need to be transformed. I need life. John Piper

"One of the reasons sin will not rule as lord over us while we are "under grace" (Romans 6:14) is that, while we are under grace, God is at work in us to will and to do his good pleasure." John Piper, "Hope-giving Promises for Triumph Over Sin"

3. **Removal of the Stony Heart...** (v. 26) "I will remove the heart of stone..."
4. **A New Heart with New Desires ...** (v. 26) "I will give you a new heart and a new spirit..."
5. **A New Enablement** – Not only are we new, but there is a New Power (a new person) present in us who brings NEW ABILITIES

"Spirit people not only want to please God but are empowered to do so."
Gordon Fee, "Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God", p.105

Ez 36:27 "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules"

If you are a Christian, then all these things Are True about You!!

Following the "Roman Road"—the Paved Version of the "EZEKIEL TRAIL"

1. ... **Man's Fallen Condition of Sinful Depravity** – This Necessitates that Salvation must be a Work of God's Sovereign Grace
2. ... **God's Justification based in Grace** – Rom 3:23-24
3. ... **The Removal/Death of the OLD** -- Rom 6:6, 7:4
4. ... **The New Heart that WANTS to Obey** – Rom 6:16-17
5. ... **the ENABLEMENT of the Spirit**—Rom 7:6 ...Rom 8ff (ESV Heading = "Life in the Spirit" – NOT Just Life Under Grace)

ROM 8:1-4 ... A NEW AND SUCCESSFUL WAY OF LIVING LIFE

- v. 1 ... No Condemnation Under Grace
- v. 3 ... The Backdrop of HISTORIC INABILITY

"The reason for a new covenant was the failure of the old to produce a truly meaningful righteousness, a righteousness coming from an obedient heart, rather than dutiful observances—as though God's people could be identified by circumcision, the observance of days, and food laws. ... The Spirit promised as part of the new covenant, would produce the righteousness the former covenant called for but failed to produce."
Gordon Fee, "Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God", p. 101, 103

The Recipe of Holy Law + Human Effort = INABILITY!!

The Law Could NOT Get man to Perform What it Required

- v. 3 ... "God has done" – Ez 36 "I will"
- v. 4 ... "in order that" – these were ACTIONS UNTO AN END... "the righteous law might be fulfilled in us"
Ez 36:27 "I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my statutes"

"God not only provides in Christ the full completion of the law's demands for the believer, but he also sends the Spirit into the hearts of believers to empower a new obedience to his demands."

Douglas Moo, "Romans" NICNT, p. 485

Whenever Paul wrestles theologically with "works of the law" and "justification by grace," he invariably brings in the Spirit as the key to the question, "What happens to righteousness in terms of behavior, if righteousness is by grace apart from the law?"

...the Spirit is sufficient to do what Torah was not able to do in terms of righteousness, namely, to 'fulfill in us who walk by the Spirit the righteous commandment of Torah' (Rom 8:4) Gordon Fee, "Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God", p. 100, 101, 103

...Grace Doesn't Enable Me—Grace Opens the Door for the Spirit to Enable Me!! My enablement is coming from a Living Person in me.

The Spirit as the Source of Enablement in Scripture

- **Enabling Transformation** (victory over sin; a life of righteousness and freedom) ...

Rom 8:13

Gal 5:16ff

1Thess 4:3-8

"Paul's concern here is not with their conversion, but with their present experience of God's Holy Spirit, given to them by God precisely so that they might walk in holiness. Thus the Spirit is understood as the constant divine companion, by whose power one lives out holiness."

*"the emphasis on the 'presentness' and 'indwelling' nature of the Spirit as gift point to effectual power in the struggle against sin. ...the presence of the Spirit was not simply God's gift as 'an option' against sin; nor would he have understood the Spirit as present but ineffectively so. To the contrary, the dynamic that makes Paul's argument against sexual impurity possible is the experienced reality of the Spirit." **Gordon Fee**, "God's Empowering Presence", p. 53*

*"Paul simply knows nothing about an internal struggle within the human breast, in which the flesh continually proves to be the greater power." **Gordon Fee**, "Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God", p. 107*

● **Enabling Gospel Ministry Through Each of us...**

Acts 1:8-9 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1Cor 12:1-11; Rom 12:4-8 ... Spiritual Gifts that ENABLE Serving and Strengthening the Church

Eph 4:11 ... Leadership Gifts that ENABLE Shepherding the Church

We are Enabled by the Spirit, but we are not Replaced by the Spirit.—This Capacity is in us ... awaiting our acting upon it.

*Despite the affirmations in our creeds and hymns and the lip service paid to the Spirit in our occasional conversations, the Spirit has been largely marginalized both in the halls of learning and in the life of the church as a community of faith. ... The Spirit as an experienced and empowering reality was for Paul and his churches the key player in all of Christian life, from beginning to end. The Spirit covered the whole waterfront: power for life, growth, fruit, gifts, prayer, witness, and everything else." **Gordon Fee**, "Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God", p. xiv*