GOD IN YOU...The Wonder and Work of the Holy Spirit – “Deliverance” (Romans 7-8)

As a Christ-follower, does the following description describe a reality in your spiritual life? You came to Christ and were born-again spiritually...you then set out to live your life like the Bible instructs...but over time the journey begins to feel like an uphill battle...progress slows...your wheels begin to spin...and you notice that in some areas you take two steps forward and then one back...struggling with an inner conflict between what seems like two warring forces...you want to do the right thing in your mind/heart but you seem to lack the ability/power to do it!

Romans 7:18b-19(NIV) – “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.”

Paul says...My problem is not a lack of information...“I know the good I ought to do”—AND—the problem is not a lack of inspiration...“I desire to do good—right thing”—the problem is: Implementation!

Romans 7:22-23(NIV) – “For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.” [Two words: WARTIME REALITY]

Romans 7:24(NIV) – “What a wretched man I am! WHO will rescue me from this body of death?” [NOTICE...Paul does not say WHAT will rescue me?]

Paul knew the solution to the struggle and the wartime reality inside of himself and every Christ-follower is not a WHAT...it’s a WHO! [Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit]

Romans 7:24b-25(NIV) – “...WHO can rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Romans 8:1-2(NIV) – “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” [Two words: WARTIME CAPACITY]

HOLY SPIRIT “DELIVERANCE”...involves two things:

FIRST – Holy Spirit deliverance...gives me a NEW NATURE.

When we choose to allow God’s Spirit to fill us to fullness and surrender/yield our whole self to His Lordship over our life He delivers us from the control of the flesh so that we are able to live according to the Spirit of God...

Romans 8:4b(NIV) – “(we) do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”
As a Christ-follower, **life lived in the Spirit does not** rule out the possibility of us choosing to sin—but it **does give us the power not to sin.** WHY? Because when we live **according to the Spirit** our sinful nature no longer has the upper hand! Our **new nature** gives us an affinity toward holiness, godliness and righteousness.

Romans 8:11(NIV) – “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 [freedom due to a new nature] through His Spirit, who lives in you.”

SECOND – Holy Spirit deliverance...gives me a **NEW POWER**

Romans 8:9a(NIV) – “**You, however, are controlled** not by the sinful nature but **by the Spirit,** if the Spirit of God lives in you...”

Ezekiel 36:26-27(NIV) – “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws.”

**HOW DO WE EXERCISE OUR “WARTIME CAPACITY?”**

Romans 8:12(NIV) – “Therefore, brothers, **we have an obligation**—but not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.”

FIRST – **BELIEVE** and **FOCUS ON** what is **TRUE.**

SECOND – **FEED ON** what is **TRUE.**

Romans 8:15-17(NLT) – “So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God’s very own children, adopted into his family—calling Him, ‘Father, dear Father.’ For His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children. And since we are His children, we will share His treasures—for everything God gives to His Son, Christ, is ours, too.”

**LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

OPENING THOUGHT... As a Christ-follower, **HOW...does the following description describe a reality in your spiritual life?** [Group leader—read opening paragraph]

QUESTION #1 – **Read Romans 7:22-23**...In your opinion, what is “wartime reality?” Pastor Tim presented a solution to this struggle, what was it?

QUESTION #2 – Holy Spirit **deliverance** involves two things...what were they? And why is surrendering/yielding NOT optional?

QUESTION #3 – **Read Ezekiel 36:26-27**...What does a **new heart** and **new spirit** look like?
GOING DEEPER...To illustrate how we exercise our “wartime capacity,” Pastor Tim shared two stories about an elephant in the circus and a Eskimo fisherman [text below—group leader have some tell the story as they remember it...read from text only if necessary]...How do you relate to those two stories? What lies are you still believing? And what nature are you feeding?

BELIEVE and FOCUS ON what is TRUE

[Young circus elephants...shackle their back leg with a chain attached to a large stake in the ground...when they try to move around they can only go so far and are restrained...they eventually grow accustomed to this limitation and just live with it...over time the trainers remove the stake but leave the shackle/chain attached to the elephants leg...here’s what is so ironic...even though the elephant is free to move around any way he wants he stays put unwilling to believe that he is free.]

Pastor Tim’s manuscript: I can’t help but wonder how many Christ-followers are doing the same thing as they live out their life? The sky’s the limit because of a new nature and new power—but they are content to live beneath their privileges and even allow the devil to feed them lies about who they ARE [new creation] by reminding them about who they WERE. HERE’S THE KEY: Don’t believe him—instead, believe and focus on what is true!

FEED ON what is TRUE

[Billy Graham tells that following story in his book, “The Holy Spirit: Activating God’s Power in Your Life.” An Eskimo fisherman came to town every Saturday afternoon. He always brought his two dogs with him. One was white and the other black. He had taught them to fight on command. Every Saturday afternoon in the town square the people would gather and these two dogs would fight and the fishermen would take bets. On one Saturday the black dog would win—another Saturday, the white dog would win...but the owner always knew who would win. One day his friends asked him how he did it. His response? I starve one and feed the other—the one I feed always wins because he’s stronger!]

Billy Graham concluded with these thoughts...“This story about two dogs is our story as Christ-followers. It describes the inner warfare that takes place in the heart of every person who is born-again spiritually. We have two natures within us—both struggling for mastery. Which one will dominate us? It depends on which one we feed!”