**PREACHING NOTES: DON’T LOSE THE WONDER!**

**(A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ROMANS)**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US**

**(Leon Mileham)**

**FOR READING/MEDITATION:** Romans 8:1-17, Romans 9:1.

**A THOUGHT:**

In his *Preface to the Letter of St Paul to the Romans*, Martin Luther described Romans as *“truly the most important piece of the New Testament”*. It was Luther’s preface that John Wesley (the founder of the Methodist movement) was reading at Aldersgate Street, London on 24th May 1738 that caused him to write these now famous words in his journal:

*“While he [Luther] was describing the change which God*

*works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart*

*strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ*

*alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me*

*that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and*

*saved me from the law of sin and death”.*

Romans contains Paul’s most comprehensive teaching on salvation and what life looks like in response (though of course there is much treasure to be mined from his other letters in the Bible! *Note: Galatians particularly is a good companion piece to Romans*). As we read Romans and consider it, may the Holy Spirit give us insight, assurance and, most of all, a renewed sense of wonder at who Jesus is and what He has done for us! **DON’T LOSE THE WONDER!**

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**WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

The Holy Spirit is God. He is the third member of the Trinity with God the Father and Jesus the Son (Matthew 28:19).

The terms “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” can be read as referring to the Holy Spirit (see, for example, Romans 8:9 where both terms are used).

The Spirit is a person, not a force or power:

* The Spirit is referred to as “him” four times in John 14:7;
* When people are baptised, they are baptised in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – surely you would not baptise in the name of two persons and a force;
* If the Spirit were a force rather than a person, the expression “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts 1:7) would be grammatical nonsense – *“you will receive power when power comes on you”*.
* In the account of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, the Holy Spirit is lied to (5:3) and tested (5:9). He is also able to be grieved (Ephesians 4:30). A force or power has no emotions.
* The *Amplified* translation of John 14:26 says:

*But the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counsellor, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you.*

Such terms clearly indicate a person rather than a power/force.

The Spirit’s role in us

* He convicts us of our sin – prior to accepting Jesus as saviour for the unbeliever and also for believers (John 16:8)
* He reminds people of Jesus's words (John 14:26)
* He enables people to become more like Jesus – discipleship – through:

Guidance (John 16:13);

Helping (John 14:26)

Intercession [prayer] (Romans 8:26, 27)

Empowering, through spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

He produces God's virtues in them – fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)

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**A BRIEF SUMMARY OF ROMANS 8:1-13**

* We're all sinners and sin leads to death;
* The law is given by God through Moses, which makes people right with God if they obey it;
* But due to the “flesh" (the sinful nature, which is selfish, self-serving, which refuses to obey God, which we all have, even post-salvation, and are born with) people are unable to obey the law.
* The Good News is that Jesus has come to be a “sin offering” in our place, to take the penalty failure to keep the law demands.
* When people receive Jesus in faith, the Holy Spirit is released to them; there then becomes a new law at work in them which Paul calls the "law of Spirit who gives life" (8:2), which releases freedom to us: *“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom”* (2 Corinthians 3:7)
* We there are able to choose to live in the realm of the Spirit and act as citizens of the kingdom of God.

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**ABBA FATHER**

Romans 8:14-17 explains that the Holy Spirit reveals to us that we are God’s children, adopted into his family, with the entitlement to call God *“Abba, Father”*, an affectionate term for “father”, though not used by the Jews for Father God – Jesus used this term for his Heavenly Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Mark 14:36) and the Spirit enables us to use the same term.

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**INTIMACY**

"God didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant".

Romans 8:3 MSG

It is a wonderful thought that God sent his Son to become one of us and that it was amongst us that he laid down his life in order to save us.

It is also wonderful to think that God the Holy Spirit resides within each of us to do a sanctifying work within us [making us holy], enabling us to live the life he intended for us on earth.

Don’t ever lose the wonder of this – don’t ever let it become too familiar.

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**IS IT JUST ME?**

Though the Holy Spirit is within us, we still retain a sinful nature. How can we know if the thoughts we have are of the Spirit or are just us?

An uncertainty about this can cause us to fail to make decisions or take steps of faith.

God us to have confidence that he is working in us, sanctifying us, and revealing things to us.

Paul had a confidence in the Spirit at work within him – he says in Romans 9:1 that his words are true, confirmed by his conscience (enlightened by the Spirit) and the Spirit himself.

Sometimes we will hear a clear voice which is recognisable as the voice of God guiding and directing us\*, but sometimes it is not so clear – it is more a sense of conviction. It is important to test things out, but at the same time we are called to be people of faith! (see Romans 1:17). Trust that God the Holy Spirit is at work within you.

*God's Spirit beckons. There are things to do and places to go! This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike, 'What's next, Papa?'*

*Romans 8:14 MSG*

**DON’T LOSE THE WONDER!**

\*There are things we can do to develop the ability to better hear from God – through prayer and simply asking God to speak, which we trust he will in a variety of ways, through stillness before God and of course through reading and meditating on the word of God.