

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, February 27, 2011 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**Make Up Your Mind - Romans 8:5-11**

**Introduction:** The message for today is about a problem we all seem to have about making up our minds. For me, this was a problem I had as a teenager because when I got old enough to work, and landed my first job at a local grocery store, I was faced with a decision - do I work and make money, or do I keep playing baseball which I loved. I don't know how many times my dad told me that I was going to have to make up my mind.

Then when I graduated, I had to make up my mind as to which college I would attend and what my major would be. Then later on, because I was the original bachelor, I had so many girls clamoring for my attention; I had to make up my mind about which one I wanted to marry. (That was not really the case – I just made that up!) But you see where I'm going with this. Every day, we are faced with choices and what it comes down to is making up our minds about them.

Hank Williams is widely regarded as one of the greatest country music artists of all time. In his brief career, he had 11 #1 songs and many other top 10 hits that have been recorded by numerous artists. Williams was also known for his loose lifestyle which included alcoholism, drug use, and turbulent marriages. One of his lesser known songs tells a little of this turbulence.

*When I agree with you baby it makes you mad And when I don't it makes you sad.*

*When I argue back you pack and leave And when I don't you pout in grieve.*

*There just ain't nobody knows what I go through*

*Will you please make up your mind what you want me to do*

*You say get out and I'd better stay gone Then you have a big policeman drag me back home*

*You holler loud put him in the calaboose Then you cry and ask the judge won't you please turn him loose*

*The good Lord only knows what I go through*

*Will you please make up your mind what you want me to do*

*My life with you baby has been one hard knock Lord my head looks like an old chop block*

*And I'll tell you right now honey that ain't all You done kicked me till I feel like a used football*

*There just ain't nobody knows what I go through*

*Will you please make up your mind what you want me to do*

*Why when I married you, you were such a meek little thing But honey among tigers you'd be queen*

*If a poor little rabbit had you on his side Every hound in the country would crawl off and hide*

*There just ain't nobody knows what I go through*

*Will you please make up your mind what in the confounded cat hair you want me to do*

Well, I guess ole Hank sang the sentiments of a lot of guys who think that their ladies just can't make up their minds. But listen, it's not just the ladies who seem to be that way. Many men seem to have trouble making up their minds as well. You don't believe it; just watch us when we have a remote control in our hands!

So, since this making up our minds seems to be a universal problem, let's look at it today from a spiritual perspective, for it is there where the problem really surfaces as a real matter of consequence. For you see, having the proper mindset about spiritual matters is extremely important because not only will it determine your lifestyle, it will also determine your eternal destiny.

Turn to Romans 8:5-11. This passage is about having a proper mindset toward God and our relationship to Him. Here, Paul presents a contrast between having a mind that is set on sin and having a mind set on following the Holy Spirit.

*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.*

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

*7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*

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

*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.*

**10** *But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive 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 through his Spirit, who lives in you. **Romans 8:5-11 (NIV)***

First, let's look at the consequences of having a mind that is set on sin:

### **1. The Mind Set On Sin**

A mind set on sin produces what we could call a deadly lifestyle. Of course, we're talking about unbelievers here – those who refuse to believe in and trust in Christ for their salvation. Unbelievers are not really living a lifestyle at all—it's a death style. In vs. 5-8, let's notice three things about these people whose minds are set on sin. First of all,

#### **A. Unbelievers Are Frustrated Without Faith**

Paul says in vs. 8, *“Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.”* A recent survey revealed that 94% of Americans believe in God. Probably most of them would also want to try and please God. But there's a difference in believing in God and having faith in God. For a person who wants to please God, without a faith in God, it is an exercise in futility because the way most people think they can please God is to stop doing wrong things, to clean up their acts, or to get their lives straightened out. But we don't have the power to do that on our own!

Think about your sins like dead leaves on a tree. Tree experts tell us that dead leaves don't fall off trees; they get pushed off. One expert said, *“A branch that falls from a tree, that lays on the ground will still have its leaves attached. Those leaves won't ever separate from that branch. They'll just hang on there through summertime, through the next year. The thing that makes leaves fall is the life inside the tree. As the point of the branch that holds that old leaf on it is getting ready to produce life in the spring, it hardens and closes and literally pushes off the old dead leaves.”*

There's a great lesson in that. We spend a lot of our time trying to push off a lot of things in our lives we shouldn't have; bad thoughts, bad deeds, and bad habits! That's usually what New Year's resolutions are all about. But the best way is to allow the life of Jesus in us to push them away, to replace those bad things with the new life of the Holy Spirit. If you don't understand that great truth, you're going to walk around frustrated much of your spiritual life. **Heb. 11:6 (NIV)** is a foundational verse about faith and pleasing God: it says, *“And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”* Paul comes along and says the same thing here. *“Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God”* because they don't have faith! The second thing Paul says about unbelievers is:

#### **B. Unbelievers May Profess, But They Do Not Posses.**

Look back at 9b, it says, *“And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”* There are only two kinds of people: those who belong to Christ and those who don't. The way to distinguish one group from the other is by whether or not a person possesses the Spirit of Christ or not. Anyone can profess to being a Christian, but professing and possessing are two entirely different things. I can profess that I'm a genius, but I don't have the qualifications of a genius. I don't possess the intellectual capacity to back up such a claim.

Jesus said in **Mt. 7:21 (NIV)**, *“Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father which is in Heaven.”* You see, it's not religion that saves a person; it's a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Anyone can profess to be a Christian, but if they don't possess the life of God in the person of the Holy Spirit, the Bible says they don't belong to Christ. So Paul talks about people who have frustration without faith, and who have profession without possession, and then says something else about unbelievers:

### **3. Unbelievers Live Without Life.**

Look at vs. 6. it says, *“The mind of sinful man is death.”* In vs. 7 it says, *“That mind is hostile to God...it cannot submit to God's laws.”* You may ask, *“How can a person live without life?”* Well you have to understand in the Greek, there are two different words for 'life.' One is *“bios.”* We get our word *“biology”* from it. That speaks of just physical life. But the other word for life is *“zoi.”* This is the word used most often to speak about a quality of life—about a spiritual life. For instance, in **John 10:10 (NIV)** when Jesus said, *“I have come that you might have life,”* He wasn't talking about biology. He said, *“I have come that you might have a quality of life (zoi)*

*and you might enjoy it to the fullest.*” Many people have ‘*bios*’ but they don’t have ‘*zoi*.’ In **1 Tim. 5:6 (NIV)**, Paul writes about a woman who is living only for pleasure and he says, “*But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.*”

There’s a story about a millionaire who died and didn’t want to leave anything behind so he left orders that when he died he wanted to be buried with all his possessions and cash they could get in his Cadillac! Well, they dug the hole and used a crane to lower him and that Cadillac in the ground. As they did one of his old buddies said, “*Man...that’s really living isn’t it?*”

Well, some people may think that’s living, but it still looks like death to me. There are a lot of people who are living, but who don’t have life! If you don’t have Jesus, you don’t have life. Life doesn’t begin at 40, real life begins at whatever age you ask Jesus into your life. Now, let’s talk about the other mindset.

## **2. The Mind Set On the Spirit**

Paul says that the mind set on the Spirit produces a lifestyle of peace. Look at verse 6b, “*But the mind controlled by the Spirit is life (zoi) and peace.*” That sounds a lot better than the other alternative doesn’t it? It’s hard for me to imagine anyone turning down a life of peace and tranquility and security. The fact is, people usually don’t turn down a life of peace as much as they look for that peace in all the wrong places. But the Bible says the only way you can have peace is to have your mind set on the Spirit.

Here in our Scripture for today, Paul says three things about the Holy Spirit’s relationship to a Christian. Rom. 8 is all about the Holy Spirit - He mentions the Holy Spirit 21 times! Let’s notice three ways the Holy Spirit relates to us as Christians:

### **A. The Holy Spirit Dwells in Believers (READ vs. 9)**

Four times in vs. 9-11 he says when you become a Christian the very spirit of God lives inside you.

In John 14:16-17, Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit to His disciples, “*And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him for He lives with you and He will be in you. On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, you are in Me and I am in you.*” Jesus was trying to get across the fact that as a human, He couldn’t be in but at one place at a time. But when He comes in the form of the Holy Spirit of God, He can be with every person personally, He says, “*Now I am with you, but when the Holy Spirit comes He will be in you (literally, I will be in you).*” When we’re saved, our lives become the dwelling place for the Spirit of God. Paul says in **1 Cor. 6:19 (NIV)**, “*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received of God?*” We like to call this building “*God’s house,*” but that is not theologically correct. As a believer, our body is literally “*God’s house.*” This is His Temple.

You see, in the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people, but in the New Testament He has a people for His temple! The Spirit of God lives in a Christian and we are expected to obey that Spirit. That means we are to put our minds on the Holy Spirit and pay attention to Him and obey His leadership. Secondly The Bible teaches that:

### **B. The Holy Spirit Controls Believers (READ vs. 9)**

Another way to put this is by saying “*filled*” with the Spirit. Now being indwelt with the Spirit and filled or controlled by the Spirit is two different things. **Eph. 5:18 (NIV)** says, “*Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery, instead be filled with the Spirit!*” Does this imply that as Christians, we can be indwelt by the Spirit but not be filled with the Spirit? I believe it does. You see, a believer is always indwelt by the Spirit—but not always filled or controlled by the Spirit. Now that doesn’t mean that we have to get more of the Spirit of God. You never get any more of the Spirit, but the truth is, He can get more of you! And the only way He can get more of you is by you surrendering more of your life and your will to Him. So being filled with the Spirit is not getting more of God—it’s God getting more of you!

Every Christian is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but not every Christian is always controlled by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we listen to that old sinful nature and we mind what it says instead of what the Spirit of God says.

Did you know that nowhere in the New Testament are you commanded to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit? That’s because as a Christian, you are indwelt! That’s a fact. But several times in the New Testament we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and this is one of those times. “*Be filled with the Holy Spirit.*” God wouldn’t command us to do something if it just automatically happened. So, when you are filled with the Holy

Spirit, you have totally surrendered to the Holy Spirit and that's when we do what Jesus did. That's when the fruit of the Spirit is demonstrated in your life—we show love and joy, we have peace, we exercise patience, we handle people with gentleness, we exhibit goodness, and faithfulness, and self-control.

The key to the Christian life is not so much looking at Jesus and trying to imitate Him. It's surrendering to the Spirit of Jesus living inside of you and allowing Him to live His life through us.

The Holy Spirit Dwells in Believers, Controls and finally:

### 3. The Holy Spirit Renews Believers (READ vs. 11)

As the Holy Spirit lives in us and controls us, He also wants renew us, to change us, and conform us to the image of Christ.

How? First there's a *"daily renewal."* 2 Cor. 4:16 says, *"Therefore, we do not lose heart (get discouraged) though outwardly we are wasting away (growing older) yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."* If you thought the Christian life was just getting Jesus in your heart and having your sins forgiven so you can go to Heaven when you die; you're missing the whole point! The Christian life is a daily experience of renewal.

That was the whole lesson of God sending the manna to the children of Israel in the wilderness. If you recall, they had to gather it every day. They couldn't depend on yesterday's supply. It rotted on them. It was no good.

The same is true with our relationship with God. I can't only depend on something that happened 40 years ago. That was vitally important in getting my spiritual walk started, but today's a new day. I'll get stale and indifferent if I'm only depending on that initial salvation experience to carry me. I've got to have a daily walk with Jesus. So that's just one part of it: a daily renewal.

But there's also a future renewal and that's what the latter part of vs. 11 is talking about. Paul says that Jesus *"will also give life to our mortal bodies through His Spirit..."* Our bodies are getting old. I've been your Pastor for almost 6 years now, and I've noticed something about you – y'all are looking old! I see a lot more gray hair and wrinkles and sags than I used to!

Yeah, it's happening to me too! My beard has turned gray and my hair has turning loose! My back's out of whack and my knees say, *"Oh please!"* every time I go to pick up something.

That's what it means when the Bible says our bodies are mortal. But the Bible says one day the Spirit is going to give life to that mortal body. Whether we're dead or whether we're alive when Jesus comes back, we will immediately receive a resurrection body for all eternity. That's the good news.

**Conclusion:** Lou Little, head football coach at Georgetown had a player one year who was a *'walk on.'* He was undersized, and not very good, but the coach kept noticing him walking around the campus with his father. He admired that about this young man and developed an affection for him. He even let him play some on defense when the game got out of hand.

One day, the coach got the news that this player's father had just died suddenly of a heart attack, and he had to tell him. He told him to go home to his family, and don't worry about coming back for the game. But to his surprise the next Saturday, there he was, dressed out and ready to play. He said to Coach Little, *"Coach, would you let me start today?"* Coach said, *"Son, you've been through a tragedy, and I know you have a lot of heart, but I can only let you play a couple of plays. Will that be all right?"*

The young man said OK, and he started the game at linebacker. Well, in those first few plays, this kid covered the whole field, made numerous tackles and was the key to the defense. He was so good, he played the entire game, and Georgetown won. After the game, Coach Little went to him and said, *"Son, what was different about you today?"* The player said, *"Coach, not many people knew but my father was blind, and for all of this year, he had never seen me play, but today for the first time he saw me play and I just wanted to please him."* That made the difference.

We have a heavenly father and the reason we need to make up our minds to live a holy life is **not** so people will look at us and say, *"Good for you."* The reason we want to live a holy life, full of the Spirit, is to please our Father in Heaven.