

“LIFE IN THE SPIRIT”
Isaiah 38:15-20, John 16:5-15, Romans 8:1-11
July 23 & 24, 2022

Tony Evans gives us an interesting situation. He says, “Most of us have lights on our dashboards of our cars. One of those lights indicates when it’s time to service the engine or change the oil. Now the first time the light comes on, you wonder what’s wrong. Some of you may look under the hood to give the impression that you know what you’re doing. Sometimes people lift up the hood and start jiggling wires trying to look like they know what in the world they are doing. After all of this, the light still won’t go off.

“That light that comes on in your dashboard is designed to let you know you have a deeper problem. When the light comes on, the light is not the problem. The light is an indicator that something deeper is wrong. Now unless you are a mechanic, you can’t know all that the light is trying to tell you because underneath that hood are intricacies that are beyond your abilities or knowledge. So when the indicator light comes on in my car, [he says] I take it to my dealer who represents my [car’s] maker, because the maker has a dealer who sold me the car. They understand the make, model, and serial number of my car. They have all the parts for my car. By delivering it to the maker, I give the maker the responsibility of servicing it.

But, “If you’ve got an indicator light that’s come on in your life, and its saying things are dark, and you’ve done everything you know to fix that indicator light but it won’t go off... If it just keeps shining red, letting you know that something needs to be done, that is an invitation to bring it to [your] Maker and let the Maker do in your life what you can’t do. He knows how to get down to the intricacies, fix what’s wrong, and bring light to a dark situation. **God wants you to bring your life to Him and let Him service you.**

“Oh, by the way, [Tony says] when I take my car in, I have an extended warranty. My extended warranty basically says whatever is wrong, it will be fixed at no cost to me. When most people get a car, it comes with a warranty. That warranty says that whatever is wrong, broken, or out of line, it will

be fixed by the dealer if the owner brings it in.”¹ But the responsibility to bring the car into the dealer is still ours. Unless we take advantage of that warranty, the warranty is useless. We have to use it to benefit from it.

That’s what King Hezekiah did when the “warning light” came on in his life. *“He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years...He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father David had done...Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook”* (2 Kings 18: 2, 3, 5-7).

But then he became ill. God told Isaiah to tell Hezekiah, *“Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover”* (Isaiah 38:1). It was a bright-red light informing Hezekiah that something was desperately wrong in his life. He had been forewarned of his death; not that God was going to kill him, but God was informing him of his eminent death. After all, why would God kill one of His most trusted and faithful servants? **The warning light in Hezekiah’s life invited him to go to God for His help.**

You see, the king had a warranty with his life. He had been faithful to the Lord all his days, so when the illness came upon him that would lead to his death, he responded to the Lord, *“Remember, Lord, how I have walked before You faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in Your eyes”* (38:3). Having addressed the issue with the Lord, he was given 15 more years to live. God instructed Isaiah what to do to bring healing back to Hezekiah. Hezekiah used his warranty in order to resolve the situation within his life and found healing.

We heard Hezekiah’s response to the Lord’s giving him healing in our reading of Isaiah 38. He continued to sing praises to the Lord for all that God had done for him. The Holy Spirit within him praised God for His mercy and grace. Because Hezekiah had trusted in the Lord God Almighty with his

¹ (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009] pg. 190-191)

whole heart, he was able to turn to Him when life was fleeting away. The illness drew him closer to the Lord, and the Lord's mercy reinforced Hezekiah's faith in the Lord. Because He trusted in the Lord and followed all His commands, God reset the warning light in Hezekiah's life, and granted him mercy and grace for a longer life. **Hezekiah's faith in the Lord saved him.**

And we have that encouragement from Jesus, Himself, as to what we are to do in the midst of our own lives when the warning light shows up on our dashboards. Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit in order that we might deal with all the "red light warning" situations that occur for us. Because of our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior, we also have a warranty for our life. And **when we are faithfully striving to serve the Lord in all our ways, God is good on His promise to resolve the issues in our lives.** He invites us to follow Him, trust in His ways, and to seek Him every day for His guidance and direction.

Jesus describes the work that the Holy Spirit will do for us. He says, "*...he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement; about sin, because people do not believe in Me: about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer; and about judgement, because the prince of this world now stands condemned*" (John 16:8-11).

You see, the Holy Spirit tells the truth to us, allowing us to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. The world has flipped what is right and wrong upside down so that what is wrong to God is right in this world, and what is right with God is wrong in this world. In fact, the only "sin" the world recognizes is the stuff that the people of faith do that is contrary to the mindset of the world. Everything that is reprehensible to God is given a go-ahead by the world, and we see it in almost every aspect of our lives, from language, to relationships, to marriage, to death, and even to political agendas.

In his 1988 book, *Whatever Became of Sin*, Karl Menninger states that society today no longer recognizes sin as sin, and accurately reiterates Romans 4:15, "*where there is no law, there is no sin.*" God's word is law, but when the world no longer recognizes the Word of God as authoritative, then there is no more law, and therefore there is no sin.

However, we have to remember that we are not to held accountable according to the ways of the

world, but according to the Word of the Lord our God. God identifies sin in every one of us, and He will not tolerate that sin in His presence. Therefore, if we make a lifestyle of living in sin, we have no place with the Lord. To be His people, we must follow the Lord's Word and Ways.

And that's why the Holy Spirit also judges about righteousness. The world tells us that we must do whatever is necessary to prove ourselves righteous in the eyes of others. However, God's Word tells us that "*There is no one righteous, not even one*" (Romans 3:10). Because of sin in our lives, there is no one who is righteous for us to model our lives after accept the One without sin, Jesus Christ. No matter how we present ourselves, no matter how good we make ourselves look, no matter what we do to make ourselves look pure and holy, on our own, outside of the forgiveness and grace given to us from Jesus Christ, all our righteousness is like filth rags to God. Isaiah 64:6 says it best for us: "*All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*" **Nothing we can ever do on our own makes us deserving of receiving eternal life.** We all deserve death, but by the grace of God through our Savior, Jesus Christ, we have hope for God's forgiveness.

And then the Holy Spirit has the truth about judgment. While we establish judges here on the earth in the hope of finding just and right verdicts in the things of this world, their judgments are often way off of what the Lord God Almighty says is right and just. Our judgment is clouded by our own reason, experience and tradition surrounded by sin. **Without God's Word guiding us, we are lost.** But God's judgment is true and altogether righteous. Isaiah 66:16 says, "*For with fire and with His sword the LORD will execute judgment on all people, and many will be those slain by the LORD.*" We need to live according to God's righteousness in order to avoid God's judgment.

In our world today, those who are guilty of heinous crimes are being judged "not guilty" and released based upon technicalities within the law. Yet, those who are standing up for the good and right in God's eyes are being imprisoned. The judgments of our "legal system" have been turned up-side-down where the guilty are let free and the innocent are held in contempt.

However, the judgment of the Lord has already been made toward the wrongdoers and evil ones. Satan has already been condemned to eternal death along with all those who follow him. Jeremiah 25:31 tells us *“The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth, for the Lord will bring charges against the nations; he will bring judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword.”* **The Lord’s judgment is the final word as to what is good and righteous, not human judgment.**

The Holy Spirit will be the One to lead us into God’s truth and teach us the ways that we are to go to remain faithful to the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who brings life to us as He guides us in the truth of the Lord our God. For *“He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify [Jesus] because it is from [Jesus] that He will receive what He will make known to you”* (John 16:13-14).

You see, when the warning light comes on within us, telling us of a much deeper problem that we have, **the Holy Spirit is the One who will give the truth so that we can return to the Lord and seek His will and His ways. Only then will we find real life.** And that’s the very message that we hear from the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:1-11. Listen to these words. (READ Romans 8:1-11)

“On the cross, when Jesus died in your place for your sin, your salvation came with a warranty. When you accepted Jesus Christ, eternity in heaven was purchased for you. You will forever live with God when you die, because the gift of salvation is the gift of eternal life IF you are trusting Jesus Christ as your sin bearer for the forgiveness of your sins. You have been forgiven and given the gift of eternal life, but God has given you a temporary warranty.

“Now, you have still got to purchase the long-term warranty. It’s not that you can lose your salvation, [for it cannot be taken away from you.] The warranty is not related to your salvation, however, it’s related to your service. See, the warranty has to do with servicing you...until it’s time to trade it in. One day you’re going to trade in this body for a new one. One day you’re going to trade in time for eternity. One day you’re going to trade in this life for the life to come.”²

² (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, pg. 191)

We use our warranty in Jesus Christ to continue to find help for us to follow God's will and God's ways. **With the help of the Holy Spirit's guidance, we find the fixes in our lives that deal with the deep problems within us caused by sin.** Salvation comes to us as we trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and dedicate our entire lives into His service. The only way that we can lose our Salvation is if we deny the work of in the Holy Spirit in our lives and deny that Jesus has done anything to set us free from sin and death. We thereby forfeit any salvation from the Lord because we give it up.

The ways of the world (that is the ways of the flesh) call us to live by our own strength, our own wisdom, and our own decisions, thereby rejecting any guidance and direction by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The mindset of the world is that we have to "make it" on our own. But none of us can ever do that on our own and be good enough to merit eternal life given by God.

However, when we turn to Jesus Christ, when we claim Him as the One who has paid the price for our sin to set us free from its end result, death, we are no longer under the law of sin and death and are released from all condemnation. **It is the Holy Spirit who gives life to us and sets us free from the punishment warranted by our sin.** Following the laws of man are not enough - we must obey and follow the laws of God, claim Jesus Christ as our Savior, and then live in the ways of the Holy Spirit, who guides us into all righteousness. When we live by the Holy Spirit, we meet the righteousness of the Law as we remain obedient to Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:4).

But we have the huge battle before us as to whom we will follow throughout our lives. Paul states it well, *"those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God"* (Romans 8:5-8). The ways of the world and the ways of God are completely opposite from each other, and we must choose which we will follow with our live.

It is only through the help of the Holy Spirit that we can live a life that is pleasing to the

Lord our God. Because we are weak in spirit, we are sorely tempted to follow the ways of the world, which lead us away from God. So through the help of the Holy Spirit, we are guided and led beyond the temptations of this world to find God's blessings.

But there are many who proclaim to be Christians but who are not following the ways of God. They are "Christians In Name Only," pretending to know Jesus, claiming to know the Holy Spirit, but demonstrate no works proving that they follow either Jesus or the Holy Spirit. They are people who "have a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5). They make a great show of being righteous and upstanding, but they do not hold onto the ways of Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us, "*And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness*" (Rom. 8:9-10). While you might claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, if you do not live in accordance to His Words and follow His teachings, if you do not live with Jesus as Lord of your life with His Spirit living in you, you do not belong to Jesus Christ! **It's not enough for you to simply SAY you are a follower of Jesus - you must live your life following Him in every way of your life.** We "*are in the realm of the Spirit, IF indeed the Spirit of God lives in [us]*" (Rom. 8:9). Saying it is one thing, but living it is quite another thing. And Jesus tells His disciples plainly, "*Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them*" (Matthew 7:20). Our daily lives proclaim what our hearts believe and hold close to.

If Salvation were to be given solely based upon our adherence to the Law of God, then none of us would make it into heaven. Since all of us are sinners in need of God's grace through Jesus Christ, none of us can satisfy the requirement of sinlessness in order to merit eternal life all on our own. So God provided us forgiveness of sin through Jesus, and only those who have Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and live according to the Word of God find eternal life.

So Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to be with those who profess Him as their Savior so that they could be guided in His ways. The Holy Spirit opens up our eyes and minds to the truth of God regarding

sin, righteousness and judgment so that we might stay true to God's Word. **The Holy Spirit then empowers us to live our lives contrary to the ways of the world so that we might be living witnesses of all that God can do in those who trust in Him and follow Him.**

Paul encourages us with a few more instructions. *"Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation - but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live"* (Rom. 8:12-13).

When we have Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, we then must stay loyal only to Him, with no regard to the things of this world, but focused wholly on being true to Jesus in all we do and all we say.

Oh, there will be times when we fail, for we are human still, but we are to strive to live for Jesus. That means we are to go all-out for Jesus. We are to do our very best to honor Him in all things. We are to do our utmost to live only for the Lord so that others might see Him through us. **We are to make every effort to stay only on the path that Jesus walked, guided by the Holy Spirit, so that we might have real life through Him.**

Live your life in the Holy Spirit so that God can use you in every way, every day, for the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. Let's pray...

Father God, thank You for providing Jesus to be our example of how to live for You. There is so much in this world that would distract us and draw us away from You, but You keep calling us to follow You. Grant us once more Your Holy Spirit to guide us and empower us to be children of God, living for You with all our might. May He open our eyes to the truth of Your holy Word, so that we learn, understand, believe and follow every command, not to make ourselves look better than another, but to demonstrate Your ways in this world. Lead us in the coming days and months as we seek to follow You with all our hearts as a church devoted to staying true to Your Word. May our faith in You be true and righteous, following Your Holy Spirit. Bless us today, so that by our example, You may be glorified, and that many will come to know You through us. This we pray in Jesus' name. AMEN.