

## **A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME**

### **WHO OR WHAT CONTROLS YOU MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

Romans 8:6 "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace."

"The good that I would do I do not and that which I would not, that I do." (Romans 7:19) In these words St. Paul described his spiritual struggle. His struggle is common to all human beings because, even when baptized, the old sinful nature of a person attempts to retake possession of that person. Daily you and all people battle between an attempt by his or her flesh to take control of their life and the Holy Spirit of God having control.

When the flesh is in control, Paul writes in Galatians 5:19-21, it will lead a person into sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like." St. Paul warns, ". . . those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

However, when a person is controlled by the Holy Spirit, St. Paul says their life is filled with "life and peace." There is a great difference in the life of a person controlled by their flesh versus one who is controlled by the Spirit. "Whoever sows to please the flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." (Galatians 6:8)

These words of St. Paul are important because a person under control of their flesh is deceived by the pleasure and "sweet taste" the works of the flesh produce not realizing that their flesh is leading them to eternal death. What seems to them to be good is not good at all.

The tug-of-war between your flesh and the Holy Spirit who lives in you by virtue of your baptism and the power of the Gospel is real. Only when you are under control of the Spirit will you receive life and peace. (today's devotional text) The Spirit leads you into a life that is in harmony, friendship, and communion with God. Only the Spirit prompts you to think, say, and do what is pleasing to Him. Only the Spirit keeps you in the true faith to life everlasting.

Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, into my heart and life to lead me in paths of righteousness for Christ's sake in whose name I pray this. Amen.

Holy Spirit, ever dwelling In the holiest realms of light;  
Holy Spirit, ever brooding O'er a world of gloom and night;  
Holy Spirit ever raising Those of earth to thrones on high;  
Living, life-imparting Spirit, You we praise and magnify.

Holy Spirit, ever living As the Church's very life;  
Holy Spirit, ever striving Through us in a ceaseless strife;  
Holy Spirit, ever forming In the Church the mind of Christ;  
You we praise with endless worship For Your gifts and fruits unpriced.

Holy Spirit, ever working Through the Church's ministry;  
Quick'ning, strength'ning, and absolving, Setting captive sinners free;  
Holy Spirit, ever binding Age to age and soul to soul  
In communion never ending, You we worship and extol.  
(LSB 650)