Getting To Know Your Best Friend

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Main Scripture Text: Romans 8:9

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." ROMANS 8:9

Outline

Introduction

- I. As the Spirit of Life, He Gives Us Our Life
- II. As the Spirit of Christ, He Glorifies Our Lord
- III. As the Spirit of Adoption, He Guarantees Our Legacy
 - A. We Have a New Relationship
 - B. We Have a New Assurance
 - C. We Have a New Certainty

Conclusion

Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn to Romans chapter 8 with me. Sunday morning, I spoke on this subject: Don't Mistreat Your Best Friend. Now, tonight, I want to speak to you on this subject: Getting to Know Your Best Friend. Perhaps I should have brought this message first, but Romans chapter 8, I want you to notice a very interesting verse. The Bible says in verse 9, "But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." And then, Paul makes a very emphatic statement that, if you don't mind underlining, you ought to underline in your Bible: "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And in the Greek language that's an emphatic negative, and he's just saying plainly and clearly that, if the Spirit of Christ doesn't dwell in you, my dear friend, do not belong to Christ; you are on your way to hell.

Now, Romans chapter 8 is a great chapter on the Holy Spirit of God. Many things are taught in Romans chapter 8, but it is a great chapter on the Holy Spirit. And in Romans chapter 8 the apostle Paul is making a comparison between the saved and the lost, the saints and the ain'ts. And that comparison, my dear friend, hinges on the Holy Spirit—those who have the Holy Spirit and those who do not have the Holy Spirit. What

is the distinguishing mark of a Christian? What is the one test beyond all other tests that a person has been saved? It is this: does he have the Holy Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit dwell in him?

Now, just put your bookmark there in Romans 8, because we're going to come back to that, and look with me in John 14 for just a moment, and notice what the Lord Jesus says also about this comparison. In John chapter 14, beginning in verse 16, "Jesus said, And I will pray the Father and he will give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth"—now, here He's talking about the Holy Spirit, and He calls Him the Word of truth—"whom the world cannot receive." And there again the Lord is making the difference. The saints of God have the Holy Spirit, they receive the Holy Spirit, but the world does not receive the Holy Spirit, "because it seeth him not." Now, the word seeth him does not mean that the world does not literally see Him. We know the world literally doesn't see Him, but neither do you. He is a spirit, and a spirit can't be seen. The word see here means that the world does not perceive Him, the world does not understand Him. It's used in the same sense in which Jesus said, in the third chapter of John, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." That means you can't perceive. If I'm talking to you about something, I say, See? I mean, do you understand that? What Jesus is saying here is, the world can't perceive Him, the world doesn't understand Him, and then, He goes on to say that, "neither knoweth him." Now, you may know about Him, but you do not know Him intimately. You can't perceive the Holy Spirit, you cannot fellowship with the Holy Spirit, if you are of the world. It is impossible. You may know about Him, but you do not know Him intimately. And, because you have not received Him.

Now, a good test as to whether you're saved or not is just simply this: Have you received the Holy Spirit? As a matter of fact, in Acts chapter 19, Paul met some disciples and he had reason to believe, just wonder whether they were saved at all or not. He asked them, he said, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you were saved, since you believed? And they said, We didn't even know if there was a Holy Spirit. Paul said, Is that right? What were you baptized for? Oh, they said, We were baptized with John's baptism. And then, Paul realized that these people had come right up to the threshold of salvation but they'd never received the Lord. And he preached unto them Jesus, and they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. My dear friend, the distinguishing mark of a child of God is this: that he has the Holy Spirit.

If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't know anything about God. And we're coming back to Romans 8 in just a moment, but go to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 for a moment. I want to read a passage of Scripture that's often used at funerals, but it's taken out of context a little bit when you use it at a funeral. And turn with me, if you

would, to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 9. The apostle Paul is talking about understanding or perceiving the things that belong to God, and he says, "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Now, so many times we use this as a funeral text, and we say, Oh, isn't it wonderful? Aunt Susie is seeing what eyes can't see, and hearing what our ears can't hear, and knowing what our hearts can't know, because now she's in heaven. But that isn't what this verse means. Look at it right now. What he is saying is that your natural eye cannot perceive, understand, behold spiritual truths, neither can your natural ear perceive spiritual truth, neither your natural heart. What he's saying is that you will never comprehend spiritual things visually, audibly, emotionally—never. Not by the eye-gate, not by the ear-gate, not by your heart. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ears heard, nor entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But notice: "God hath"—not will, but already has—"revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit says of all things, Yea, that be things of God."

Now, he's just contrasting two types of people: those who live by their senses and those who live by the Spirit. Verse 12: "Now, we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." What Paul is saying is, you don't have to wait till you get to heaven to see and experience these things, but the only way you're going to know them is by the Holy Spirit. Verse 14: "But the natural man"—that is, an unsaved man, a man in his natural state—"receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they're foolishness unto him."

Now, if I preach the gospel to you, and you say that that's foolish, or if God's Word appears foolish to you, well, you're just giving proof positive that you have never been saved. They're foolishness to the natural man: "neither can he know them, because they're spiritually discerned." He doesn't have the equipment to know them. There's no way that he can know these truths, "but he that is spiritual judgeth all things," that is, he discerns all things.

And so, again, turn with me to the next to the last book of the Bible, to Jude. And we're going to get back to Romans 8 in just a moment, but I'm really trying to set the stage, and I'm trying to get you to see what makes the difference is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the distinguishing mark of a Christian. And the book of Jude here, there's just one chapter, so we don't give a chapter reference, but look in verse 10. He's speaking of the unsaved, and he says, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not"—why don't they know them? Because they're spiritually discerned—"but what they know naturally as brute beasts." That is, a man without the Holy Spirit has no head start over an animal in knowing God. They're like a brute beast. And then, look, if you would, in verse 19 of Jude: "These be they who separate themselves, sensual,"—

that is, they're living by their senses—"having not the Spirit." So you have the sensual man and the spiritual man, the natural man and the spiritual man. I'm just trying to tell you in all of these verses what Paul has said in Romans chapter 8 and verse 9: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Now, back to Romans 8. All of that's by way of introduction. All right now, back to Romans 8, and I want you to see that God is your best friend, through description. There are three references to the Holy Spirit, and he's described three ways. For example, in Romans 8, verse 2, He is called the Spirit of life. Do you see that? "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." There, the Holy Spirit—and the word Spirit is capitalized in my Bible—it's talking about the Holy Spirit; He is called the Spirit of life. Your best friend is the Spirit of life.

Now, go down to verse 9, and there He's called the Spirit of Christ. Notice the last part: the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of Christ. In this verse, He's called both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. "Now, if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." So the Holy Spirit is called in verse 2 the Spirit of life; He's called in verse 9 the Spirit of Christ. Now, go down to verse 15 and in verse 15 He is called the Spirit of adoption. Now, I believe in these three references you really have the office work of the Holy Spirit, your best friend, in your life. He is the Spirit of life, He is the Spirit of Christ, and He is the Spirit of adoption. And I want you to get to know your best friend because this is His threefold ministry to you. He ministers to you as the Spirit of life; He ministers to you as the Spirit of Christ; He ministers to you as the Spirit of adoption.

I. As the Spirit of Life, He Gives Us Our Life

Now, let's look at these. As the Spirit of life, He gives us our life. We have life by the Holy Spirit. I don't mean existence. Even an unsaved man has existence—he will exist forever; but he doesn't have life. Jesus said in John 10:10, "I've come that you might have life." Well, how do we get this life? We receive this life by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says it is the Spirit that quickens; it is the Spirit that gives life. Now, the difference between the people of the world who are religious and true Christians is this: the people who are truly saved live by the impartation of life; the unsaved live by the imitation of life. They just simply imitate the Lord. But a Christian is somebody who has received life. Jesus said in John chapter 3 we have to be born of the Spirit. When you are born, that's when you have life. You are born literally from above, which is life.

You see, man is body, soul, and spirit. Now, I know that theologians argue this, and they say, No, he's just physical and spiritual, but the Bible says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 23, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Now, man is more than a plant, because he has a soul. Plants have a body but they don't have a soul. But man

is more than an animal. Animals have a body and a soul, but animals don't have a spirit. Only man has body, soul, and spirit. And your spirit is that organ of knowledge, that part of your nature that enables you to know God. For the Bible says, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And when we get saved, God's Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.

Now, I want to point this out, that man by nature is spiritually dead. He may be physically alive, he may be soulishly or psychologically alive, but he is spiritually dead until he receives the Holy Spirit. Now, it is the Spirit that gives life. You cannot have life apart from the Spirit of God. You only have existence, and the reason that some people are religious but lost, they have never ever received the pentecostal difference, the Holy Spirit of God. And that's the reason the Bible says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." You're just dead, spiritually dead. You may have physical life, you may have emotional life, but unless the Holy Spirit has come into you, you are spiritually dead.

You remember reading in John 1, verse 4, where John is describing Jesus, and the Bible says, "In him"—that is, the Lord—"was light, and the light was the life of man." The Lord has the light, and the light is the life—John 1:4. All right, what happened when Adam sinned is, the Lord went out; and when the Lord went out, the life went out; and when the life went out, the light went out. And now he doesn't have the Lord—he's depraved; and now he doesn't have the life—he's dead; now, he doesn't have the light—he's darkened. And in order for a man to be saved again, he's got to get the Lord back in. And when the Lord comes back in, the life comes back in; and when the life comes back in, the light comes back in.

Now, how does the Lord come back in? The Lord comes back in by His Holy Spirit—which brings up a very interesting question: Who lives in you? Does God live in you—God the Father? Or, does Jesus the Son live in you? Or, does the Holy Spirit live in you? Well, all live in you. Romans 8, verse 9, says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he's none of his," but in that same verse, it calls Him the Spirit of God. And then, in Colossians 1, verse 27, the Bible says it's "Christ in you, which is the hope of glory." Don't ever make the mistake of trying to segment the Holy Trinity so precisely that you think that because the Holy Spirit is in you that Jesus is not in you. The Holy Spirit is Christ in you. The Holy Spirit is God the Father's agent to make Jesus Christ real to you. Jesus is in us by the agency of the Holy Spirit, and there's no contradiction.

And so, your best friend, first of all, is the Spirit of life, and He gives our life. The life that I have now I have because the Holy Spirit lives in me. What a difference that makes. Let me give you an illustration if I can. God formed Adam out of the dust of the earth. That we know: out of the dust of the ground, God made Adam. And there's Adam. Let's just imagine he's lying down there because he doesn't have any life yet. God has

formed him, and he's perfect. He really is; I mean, he's a specimen of a man. Everything is perfect except for one thing. He doesn't have any life. I mean, God has made him absolutely, totally perfect, but there's no life. Now, suppose God were to say to Adam, Adam, get up and act like a man. There's no way he can act like a man, because he has no life. And then, the Bible says that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and the word breath of life may be translated the spirit of life. He breathed the spirit of life into Adam, and physically and spiritually and emotionally, Adam is quickened. God breathes into this lump of clay the life.

Now, God doesn't have to say to him, Now, Adam, act like a man. Get up and walk around like a man. It's natural for him to walk like a man. He doesn't have to be begged or instructed to do it—that's just natural. He has the life; the life is inside of him right now. May I tell you, dear friend, that the same thing is true spiritually. You are a spiritual corpse until God infuses you spiritually with His life, until you receive the Holy Spirit, and to encourage you to live the Christian life before you receive the Holy Spirit is to encourage you in an impossibility. But once you do receive the Holy Spirit, once your best friend comes into you, it is perfectly natural for you to live the Christian life. I mean, it's just natural, because you have the life of God in you. Well, is it a miracle? Well, yes, it's a miracle, but once it's a miracle, you become supernaturally natural and naturally supernatural. Because you have received, there has been an impartation of life. So your best friend is called the Spirit of life. You have no life, no spiritual life, apart from the Holy Spirit of God.

II. As the Spirit of Christ, He Glorifies Our Lord

Now, not only is He the Spirit of life, who gives us life, but now, secondly, He's called the Spirit of Christ. Now, what does He do as the Spirit of Christ? As the Spirit of life, He gives our life. As the Spirit of Christ, He glorifies our Lord—He glorifies our Lord. He is called the Spirit of Christ. It is Jesus in you who is the Holy Spirit; He is the Spirit of Christ.

What is He going to do in you? When this man gets up and walks around, this man who has received the Holy Spirit spiritually, whose life is in him? What is the Spirit of life? The Spirit of life is the Spirit of Christ. Now, if I have the Spirit of Christ, who am I going to act like? I'm going to act like Christ. The Holy Spirit just reproduces Jesus Christ in me. I've told you this many, many times, but I want to tell you this one more time: there's only one person who has ever lived the Christian life. His name is Jesus—His name is Jesus. And if the Christian life is lived at your house, it'll be Jesus in you; it'll be the Spirit of Christ, who not only gives us life but glorifies our Lord. He is the one who makes Jesus Christ real in you. I mean, there's no other way; other than this, you'd just be a little cheap tin imitation of Jesus.

I'm not a golfer, Brother Sorrell is an excellent golfer, so he tells me. I am not a golfer. I've never played golf. I tried one time. I had some friends who took me out, and they said, Adrian, we want you to go golfing. I said, Fine—several preachers, and I'm a has-been athlete, and I thought I knew something about athletics, and I read some books about golfing, that you don't try to kill the ball, you let the club do the work, and you follow through, keep your eye on the ball, and all that—I thought they were going to be amazed at how well I golfed. But they were rolling in the grass laughing at me. One of them said, Adrian, you look like you're trying to kill a snake. And I just said, Well, until somebody teaches me how to play this game, I'm not going to fool with it.

But suppose I tried, when I was a kid, and a young man, to play golf like the golfer that everybody knew was Arnold Palmer. I mean, you know, he's not on the circuit as much now except on the Seniors Tour, but he was about my age; Arnold Palmer and I are about the same age. I keep my eyes on him, but Arnold Palmer, when I was, you know, a younger man, and he was a younger man, boy, he was the golfer—Arnold Palmer. Well now, suppose, back in that day, I decided I'm going to play golf just like Arnold Palmer. When I went out to play golf, Arnold Palmer was in his prime. And all I had to do is just say, well, what does Arnold do? Well, Arnold lines up, and he hits it off the tee down the fairway. Well, that's what I'm going to do. Well, friend, my deciding I'm going to do that doesn't do any good. I mean, they're still rolling on the grass laughing at me. But if there's some way that I could put Arnold Palmer in a pill and swallow him down, and his very life would permeate me, and his mind and his senses and his coordination and his eye and all he knows about golf would permeate every bit of my being, and I would come out there on the golf course with my friends, and tell them, I've never done this before, but line up and hit that ball straight down the fairway, and maybe birdie the first hole or two, they'd say, Adrian, that is amazing. But I'd have a secret, you see. I'd say, Well, it's really not me; it's Arnold in me.

Now, you say, that's a silly illustration. It is in a way, but you see, the apostle Paul said, "I'm crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Now, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, and He's the Spirit of Christ. He gives us our life; He glorifies our Lord. He gives our life; He glorifies our Lord. He is the Spirit of Christ. And, by the way, if you want to know whether a person has the Holy Spirit, don't ask if they can speak with tongues—that's not the sign that they have the Holy Spirit. Ask: Are they like Jesus? Are they like Jesus? That's the sign whether or not the person has the Holy Spirit of God.

III. As the Spirit of Adoption, He Guarantees Our Legacy

Now, there's a third thing that your best friend does. He's called the Spirit of life, He's called the Spirit of Christ, and He's also called the Spirit of adoption. Notice in verse 15 now: "And the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,"—and, by the way, if you're reading from the King James, don't let the word itself bother you, as if the Holy Spirit is a thing. That is the correct way to write that in the Greek, because in the Greek, the word spirit and itself have to line up, and they're both neuter, and so that's just a linguistic idiosyncracy, but it certainly ought to say, and may say "the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." I skipped really the verse that I wanted, verse 15, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba Father," so verses 15 through 17 is what I meant to read.

Now, He's called the Spirit of adoption. What is adoption? When this was written, adoption was a process in which a man would make perhaps a son that he had sired by a slave, an heir to his riches, although being the son of a slave, that son would not necessarily be an heir. Or he might take another man's son, as we would do today, and adopt that other man's son into his family. Adoption is a legal act where a man takes his own son, or the son of another man, and gives to him legal position, legal advantage, and legal privilege. Now, spiritually, we're born into the family of God; legally, we are adopted into the family of God. Now, a man could disinherit a natural son, but he could not disinherit by law an adopted son—it's very interesting. For example, the way they reason that is this: a natural son might be accidentally conceived—that is, we didn't mean to have a child when this child was conceived, and I don't want this child to have a part of the inheritance—but, when a man adopts a child, he knows what he's doing legally, and he locks himself in. Now, what God is saying here is that we have the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of our adoption. It's very interesting.

Now, what does the Holy Spirit, your best friend, do? He gives our life; He glorifies our Lord; He guarantees our legacy. Those are the three things: He gives our life; He glorifies our Lord; He gives our legacy. He is the Spirit of life; He is the Spirit of Christ; He is the Spirit of adoption. Now, the Holy Spirit is there to attest to and to make real what happened to you legally when you got saved.

A. We Have a New Relationship

For example, there is a new relationship.

Look, if you will here, in verse 15: "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Now, two words are here together, Abba Father. The one is Aramaic; the other is Hebrew. Abba is not a Hebrew word. It is an Aramaic word, and it literally means Daddy, or Papa. Now, I'm not being irreverent, but when the Holy Spirit of God comes into you, He gives you such a relationship with the One who has adopted you that you can call Him Abba, Father.

Now, let me tell you the difference. There were plenty of people in Abraham's day who would call him Father Abraham, because he was a patriarch; and we call him Father Abraham, but we don't call him Abba Abraham, just Father Abraham, because we know him as the father ruler of the patriarchs. But Isaac would call him Abba Abraham, or Abba Father, Daddy. You see, the Holy Spirit of God, is the Spirit of adoption, where we can call Him Abba, Father.

It means very much to me. You see, I didn't understand a lot of what my dad did when I was a little boy. My dad, when I was growing up, sold automobiles. He worked for East Coast Motors, and he sold Buicks. I didn't know that. My dad would go off, and he would say, I have an appointment with a party. I thought, Boy, he gets to go to more parties, and he'd go off to work; or, I'm going to see a party about this or that. And I never could figure that out until I got to be about 8 or 9 what kind of a party it was he kept going to. But he would go off; it didn't make any difference to me. I didn't have to understand what my dad did. He was my daddy. I can jump up in his lap, and hug his neck, and kiss him, and rub his beard, and play ball with him, or help catch minnows for him when he fished. And I loved it: he was just my Dad. And I called him Daddy. You couldn't call him Daddy; you call him Mr. Rogers. But I called him Daddy, because—and I still do. I talked to him last night on the phone. I called him Daddy—because he's my daddy.

Now, dear friend, you don't have to understand God; you don't have to know how God runs this universe. You can't understand. The ways of God are so far beyond your ways, as high as the heavens are above the earth. But you can know Him—you can know Him. You see, the Holy Spirit is not given to us that we might understand God. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord and who has been his counselor?" But you know God by the Spirit, and it's the Spirit of adoption that shows you this new relationship, this intimacy, that you have with God the Father.

B. We Have a New Assurance

But not only do you have a new relationship—listen—you have a new assurance, a reassurance. Now, continue to read, and look right here, if you will here. It says in verse 16, "And the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." That's very interesting. What does it mean, the Spirit bears witness with our spirit? Well, in Galatians chapter 4 and verse 6, the Bible says that God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart crying, Abba, Father. God sent the Spirit of Jesus

into your heart crying Abba, Father. Now, why does the Holy Spirit cry Abba, Father? Because it is the Spirit of His Son. What was Jesus' favorite name for God? It was Father. And so, if the Holy Spirit is in you, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, then the Holy Spirit is saying what? Abba Father, Abba Father, because it is the Spirit of Christ. Galatians 4:6: the Spirit of His Son is in your heart, and He's just saying, Abba Father, Abba Father.

Now, when you say, Abba Father, and the Holy Spirit is saying, Abba Father, then His Spirit is agreeing with your spirit; you're both saying the same thing. I mean, that's what He's saying, but the Spirit agrees with our spirit; this is the way that you know you're saved. The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, because the Holy Spirit and your spirit are so mingled that it is Christ in you just addressing God as Abba Father.

C. We Have a New Certainty

Now, not only do you have a new relationship, and a new assurance, but you have a new certainty, a guarantee of your riches, for he says in verse 17—here's the logic: "If you're children,"—that is, if you're an adopted child—"then an heir—and not just an heir, an heir of God; and not merely an heir of God, but a joint heir with Christ. Do you know what a joint heir is? The lawyers that are here will tell you that a joint heir means share and share alike. I don't know, dear friend, if you understand what's coming to you, but in the age to come, you're going to share and share alike with the Lord Jesus Christ, because God has given you legally the position Jesus has intrinsically. You will have been adopted as a son of the Lord Jesus Christ and how, how blessed this is. Now, a man can disinherit a natural son, even, but he could not disinherit an adopted son. And so, your best friend, He gives our life, because He's the Spirit of life; He glorifies our Lord, because He's the Spirit of Christ; He guarantees our legacy, because He's the Spirit of adoption.

Conclusion

Now, I want to tell you again that, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Well, how do you get the Spirit of Christ? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trust Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, repent of your sin, and the Holy Spirit of God will come into you, as He did into me as a teenage boy so long ago.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. If you'd like to be saved tonight and be a child of God, let me help you to do it right now tonight. Even while heads are bowed in this place, just forget that anybody else is here but you and the Lord, and I'm your friend here to help you to pray, and if you want Jesus Christ to come into your life, to give you life, to glorify Jesus, and to guarantee your legacy, would you pray a prayer like this: Dear God, I need you so much. I know that you love me. I

know that you want to save me. I confess that I'm a sinner. I confess that I'm spiritually dead, but I need life. I need to be born again. I need to be saved. Jesus, you died on the cross to pay for my sin. You died to save me. You promised to save me, if I would trust you. I do trust you, Jesus. Would you tell Him that, from your heart: Oh, Lord Jesus, I commit my life to you. I receive you now as my personal Savior and Lord. Come into my heart through your Holy Spirit. Change me right now. Come in. I don't ask for a feeling. I just accept it by faith. I receive you by faith now as my Lord, and as my Savior, and as my Friend. Thank you, Lord, for saving me, and begin now to make me the person that you want me to be, and help me to live for you and never to be ashamed of you. In your name I pray. Amen.