

# The Internal Witness of the Spirit

(Rom 8:16)

- Remember the context is the assurance of justification by faith
- I. What is meant by the “Spirit’s bearing witness” here?
  - A) The 1<sup>st</sup> and most important tool for interpretation is comparing scripture with scripture
    - 1. John 7:37-39- Parallel promise to our passage
      - i. Notice the inner security and the outward effect
      - ii. The “Spirit not yet given” doesn’t mean salvation, but the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit as on Pentecost
    - 2. Rom 5:5- “Love of God shed abroad in our heart”
      - i. This isn’t our love for God, but His love for us
      - ii. Notice “shed abroad”: this isn’t convincing ourselves or even taking it by faith through the scriptures
    - 3. Acts ch 2- Compare the confidence and the outward effect after Pentecost
      - i. These men were saved, Christ said so (John 13:10 & 15:3)
    - 4. Acts 4:23-33- Poured out again
      - i. Important to notice this is fluid and not static
        - a) Consider Jonathan Edwards’ statements about the “cooling off”
    - 5. 1 Pet 1:8- “Joy unspeakable and full of glory”
      - i. Can we say this is the condition of the church always?
      - ii. This is a very special assurance and a seal of the love of God
    - 6. Revelation speaks of this type thing in symbolic language:
      - i. Rev 2:17- “Hidden manna”
      - ii. Rev 2:28- “The morning Star”
      - iii. Rev 3:12- “Name of God” written
  - B) What do we see in the history of the church?
    - 1. We must not limit the meaning of a passage to be only that with which he personal experience
    - 2. Do we see measured changes in saved people after salvation in scripture?
      - i. Are all Christians on the same level? What causes the differences?
    - 3. Consider revival:
      - i. It is a very common thing for a man to have been a fruit-bearing Christian for years, and then to receive this “witness” during revival that causes him to wonder if he had ever really been a Christian at all
        - a) In fact, it is this that is so marked in revival
        - b) It’s not the added numbers of newly saved that brings revival, that’s the effect

- 1) It is instead this “pouring forth” of the Holy Spirit among the believers that causes revival to spill outward

## II. All assurance is the work of the Holy Spirit

### A) Rom 8:16- “Himself/Itself”

1. This is done by the Holy Spirit, not us
  - i. He seals unto the person the promises of God and His inheritance
  - ii. Eph 1:13-14- “Sealing” assures me I am a Son of God, “earnest” gives me a taste/first-fruit of the inheritance
    - a) Rom 8:23- “The first-fruits of the Spirit”
2. This is not simply sanctification, but it is an aid to it and promotes it
3. This is an assurance of God’s love to us
  - i. Example of Thomas Goodwin
  - ii. In Rom 8:15- We tell God we love Him, in v.16 He tells us He loves us!
    - a) This is the highest form of assurance, as suffering (v.17) the highest form of evidence

### B) Our earliest assurances come from taking God at His word (shield of faith)

### C) We have the added assurance of “deductions” from which we can be assured

1. Like those we applied to 8:14 and the tests
2. 1 John 3:14- “Love of the brethren” or desire to keep commandments, etc.
  - i. These “tests” do go a step beyond faith in His promises, but this witnessing of the Holy Spirit is beyond even those

### D) Just as something within causes us to cry “Abba Father (knowing I am a son)

1. This is an expression/declaration of my love to God
  - i. But what Rom 8:16 is describing is God’s declaration of His love for us!
  - ii. There is no active part played by the believer in v.16
  - iii. Like the little boy in Goodwin’s example, we do not become more of a son, we become more aware of the Father’s love for us
    - a) This leads to a greater love for him and desire to serve Him and please Him
    - b) This leads to revival!
2. This is the work of the Holy Spirit alone and cannot be predicted nor “brought on”
  - i. There is no audible voice, yet it is as certain and more
  - ii. This is often done through the scriptures, but not always
  - iii. Some have experienced it in a meeting, during prayer, or even singing
  - iv. Some have experienced it in the greatest moment of need
3. This is not to be considered as a “2<sup>nd</sup> work” nor another level of Christianity
  - i. Paul was not more of a Christian or Son than the Corinthians