



Building the Holy Spirit's Governance in the Lives of Modern Christians: The Dimension of Spiritual Transformation in Romans 8:1-4

Yoas Tanugraha^{1*}, Ashiong Parhehean Munthe²

¹Sekolah Tinggi Teologi IKAT Jakarta

²Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Berita Hidup

Corresponding Author: Yoas Tanugraha yoas.tan@gmail.com

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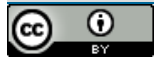
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ABSTRACT

The Decline of Morality and Spiritual Stagnation in Contemporary Indonesian Churches Indicates the Urgency of Pneumatologically Studies. The decline of morality and spiritual stagnation among contemporary Indonesian churches indicates the urgency of pneumatologically studies. This research aims to build understanding about the 'governance of the Holy Spirit' in modern Christian life, namely how the Holy Spirit guides and transforms the character of believers, by examining Romans 8:1-4 as a biblical foundation. The methodology used is systematic theology with narrative-dogmatic analysis of biblical texts, accompanied by biblical reflection and contextualization of spiritual ethics in the context of contemporary churches. The study results show that through Christ's redemptive work, believers are freed from the power of sin and condemnation ("there is no condemnation", Romans 8:1).

INTRODUCTION

The introduction concludes by describing the purpose of writing the article. Pneumatology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is becoming an increasingly urgent topic of study in the contemporary Indonesian church landscape (Allo et al., 2024). Various church traditions are facing a crisis that is not only moral or doctrinal in nature, but primarily pneumatological (Setiawan, 2025). The church is often trapped in structural and bureaucratic patterns that mimic the world's systems, so that the Holy Spirit is often marginalized as the source of life and guidance. As a result, when the Holy Spirit is no longer the main guiding principle, the church loses its vitality as the living body of Christ (Setiawan, 2025). This condition raises concerns about the need to restore the leadership of the Spirit in church life and in the personal lives of believers.

In the context of Indonesia's diverse society and modern ethical challenges, the relevance of Christian spiritual ethics is largely determined by the role of the Holy Spirit as the guide of life (Pakpahan & Tangkas, 2024). Christian ethics is not merely legalistic obedience to written law, but rather an obedience that springs from a heart renewed by the Spirit (Rabens, 2013). The Holy Spirit enables believers to live holy lives in the midst of the world, giving them the power to overcome the power of sin and produce divine character (Gal. 5:16, 22-23). Therefore, understanding how the Holy Spirit "*rules*" or leads the lives of believers is key to the formation of Christian character and integrity in the modern era.

Romans 8:1-4 offers a solid biblical foundation for a life led by the Spirit. In this passage, Paul contrasts the condition of believers who are "in Christ Jesus," free from condemnation, with their former life under the bondage of "the law of sin and death." He introduces the concept of "the law of the Spirit that gives life," a new paradigm in which the Holy Spirit takes over the role of the Law as a moral and spiritual motivator. Thus, an in-depth study of Romans 8:1-4 is expected to reveal the dimensions of spiritual transformation that occur when believers live under the rule of the Holy Spirit. This paper will

outline the views of leading theologians on the Holy Spirit, provide a theological exposition of Romans 8:1-4, and finally draw implications for the lives of Christians today, especially in the Pentecostal church environment in Indonesia.

In systematic theology, the Holy Spirit is understood as the person of the Triune God who is present and active in the world, especially in the church and in believers. The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual life (*Spiritus Vivificans*), the sanctifier, comforter, and guide who leads God's people into truth (Dorr, 2017). Classical and modern theologians place different emphases on the role of the Holy Spirit, but generally agree that without the work of the Spirit, the Christian faith cannot be lived out in a tangible way (Nel, 2021).

Karl Barth, as a 20th-century neo-orthodox theologian, emphasized that it is the Holy Spirit who actualizes Christ's work in believers and in the church (Hasan, 2022). Barth saw the relationship between Christ and believers as dynamic due to the Holy Spirit's work of: the Holy Spirit "*calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies*" Christians, making the relationship between Christ and His community alive and dynamic (Buckley, 1994). In other words, the Holy Spirit is the prophetic power that enables the church to "continue the story" of salvation in an actual way in history (Buckley, 1994). Barth also describes the Spirit as the "bond of peace" between God the Father and the Son, which unites Christ with His body, namely the church (Buckley, 1994). In Barth's framework, the "governance" of the Holy Spirit means that the same Spirit governs the church so that life following Christ is not static, following written law alone, but is moved by the impulse and guidance of the living Spirit (Buckley, 1994).

Jürgen Moltmann, in his work *The Spirit of Life*, describes the Holy Spirit as the principle of divine life poured out upon all creation (Moltmann, 2001). He refers to the experience of the Spirit as an experience of *vitalizing* divine *energy* that brings joy and freedom. Moltmann (2001) emphasizes the aspect of the fullness and outpouring of the Spirit upon all people (cf. Acts 2:17), whereby through the Spirit, God is intimately present in our lives and we also take part in God's eternal life. In his words, "*in the Holy Spirit, the eternal God takes part in our mortal life, and we take part in God's eternal life*" (Moltmann, 2001). A reciprocal *perichoresis* occurs: the Spirit enables a close communion between God and humanity. Consequently, the Holy Spirit transforms human existence so that it once again radiates the glory of God (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). A life ruled by the Spirit will bear fruit in a burning spirit of life, a love that unites and liberates, and a character that reflects the light of God's glory (Moltmann, 2001).

Gordon D. Fee, as a leading Pentecostal scholar, through his work *God's Empowering Presence*, asserts that for the Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit is God's *empowering presence* in the lives of believers (Fee, 1994). Fee (1994) shows that every aspect of Christian life according to Paul is related to the Holy Spirit: The Spirit seals our adoption as children of God, gives spiritual gifts for ministry, and especially enables a life of obedience. He writes that the continuous liberation from the tyrannical power of sin made possible by Christ's work of reconciliation can only become a reality through the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us and gives us life (Danny, 2008). In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who makes the gospel effective, applying Christ's victory over sin to the daily lives of believers. Without the Holy Spirit's leadership, Christian morality would fall to human efforts; with the Holy Spirit, believers have the key to victory over sin and can live according to God's will.

Welker (1994) in *God the Spirit* offers a "biblical-realistic" approach to pneumatology. He synthesizes the diverse biblical testimonies about the Holy Spirit, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, to describe the Spirit comprehensively. Welker (1994) rejects reducing the Spirit's role to the individual dimension alone; he highlights that the Holy Spirit works in various spheres: creating life, inspiring prophets with visions of justice, uniting the congregation in communion (*communio*), and renewing humanity collectively and individually. In Welker's (1994), perspective the 'rule of the Spirit' is realized when the church and believers obey the Spirit's promptings in every aspect, whether in teaching the word, administering the sacraments, or practicing love in society. This results in social transformation and community renewal, in line with individual renewal. Thus, Welker (1994) emphasizes that the work of the Holy Spirit is concrete and can be "observed" through the fruit produced in the life of a church that is alive by the Spirit (e.g., unity, joy, loving service).

The concept of "*governance of the Holy Spirit*" refers to the reality of the Holy Spirit as the ruler and primary guide in the lives of believers and the church. This idea is in line with the biblical testimony that believers are led by the Spirit of God (cf. Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18) and that the Spirit dwells in their hearts as His throne (1 Cor. 3:16). Theologians such as Stott (1994) emphasize that the Christian life is essentially a Spirit-controlled life: a life that is "*animated, sustained, directed, and enriched by the Holy Spirit.*" This means that every aspect of spiritual growth, from understanding the truth, to changing mindsets, to ethical actions, is under the influence and direction of the Spirit. In this framework, character transformation is seen as the fruit of the Spirit's sovereignty in believers. The Reformed theologian John Calvin's thinking is in line with this, as he refers to the Holy Spirit as *the "bond"* that unites us with Christ (Calvin, 2008). It is only through the fellowship of the Spirit that all the blessings of Christ's redemption (including the renewal of life and holiness) are poured out upon us (Calvin, 2008). Therefore, the ethical transformation

of believers (*sanctification*) is understood as the work of the Spirit who internalizes God's moral law into the human heart (cf. Jer. 31:33, Ezek. 36:27), producing voluntary obedience and sincere love. In short, this theoretical foundation affirms that the Holy Spirit acts as the agent of spiritual and ethical transformation: He liberates, enlivens, guides, and sanctifies, establishing divine rule in the lives of believers, leading them to become like Christ.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach in the field of systematic theology. The research steps include theological literature study and targeted analysis of biblical texts. First, a literature review was conducted on the thoughts of prominent theologians regarding the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) as described in the theoretical basis section. This review provides a conceptual framework and relevant theological categories.

Second, the study conducts a narrative and dogmatic analysis of Romans 8:1-4. Narrative analysis means examining the passage in the context of the overall argument of the letter to the Romans and its immediate context (e.g., its connection to Romans chapters 7 and 8 more broadly). Meanwhile, dogmatic analysis means examining the teachings or theological doctrines contained in these verses, such as the doctrines of justification, sanctification, and the role of the Holy Spirit, and then formulating their meaning systematically.

Third, a reflective-biblical approach is applied by reflecting on the theological meaning of Romans 8:1-4 for the present context. This includes an effort to contextualize spiritual ethics: findings from biblical exposition are translated into ethical principles and spiritual practices for the contemporary church, especially in the Pentecostal tradition in Indonesia. Thus, this method combines an in-depth study of the biblical text with theological reflection and contextual application, as is common in systematic theological research. The end result is expected to be a theological synthesis that is not only exegetically accurate, but also practically relevant to the lives of believers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Freedom from Sin and the Law of Death (Romans 8:1-2)

Paul opens Romans 8 with a remarkable declaration: "*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1). This statement is rooted in the doctrine of justification by faith that has been explained previously (cf. Rom. 5:1). For everyone who is "in Christ," an expression that indicates the unity of believers with Christ, the penalty for sin has been removed. God as Judge no longer pronounces guilt, because the punishment was borne by Christ on the cross (Rom. 8:3b). The practical implication is freedom from guilt and fear of punishment. A person who believes in Christ can have assurance and inner peace, knowing that he or she is no longer under God's wrath. However, "no condemnation" does not mean that believers are immune from sin, but rather that their sins no longer carry the potential for eternal punishment (Paul, n.d.). That punishment has already been "cursed in the flesh" of Christ (8:3), so that what remains for believers is discipline in the Father's love, not punishment that separates them from God. This truth provides the basis for an ethic of gratitude: believers live righteously not to earn a righteous status, but because they have been accepted and freed from punishment.

Verse 2 continues by explaining the basis for the absence of condemnation: "*The Spirit, who gives life, has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*" Here Paul introduces "the law of the Spirit that gives life" as a paradox to "the law of sin and death." The term "law" (Greek: *nomos*) is used not primarily to refer to written law, but to a principle or power that governs. The "law of sin and death" refers to the power of sin that leads to death, a reality experienced by humans under the flesh (Romans 7:21-24). In contrast, the "law of the Spirit" means the power of the Holy Spirit that gives life and frees humans from the bondage of sin. With His power, the Holy Spirit nullifies the dominion of sin and brings believers into a new order of life. This is in line with God's promise that His Spirit will put His law in the

hearts of His people (Jer. 31:33) and give them a new heart to obey His commands (Ezek. 36:26-27). In Romans 8:2, this liberation by the Spirit is closely linked to *"in Christ Jesus,"* indicating that the work of the Spirit is always tied to the work of Christ. Christ frees us from the penalty of sin legally, and the Holy Spirit carries out that liberation actually in our daily lives (Danny, 2008). In other words, Christ removes the penalty, and the Spirit breaks the chains. Ben Witherington explains that believers not only receive a verdict of "not guilty" at the moment of repentance, but are also *"empowered by the presence of the life-giving Spirit to walk in newness of life"* (Danny, 2008). The Holy Spirit does not merely convey the Good News, but carries out the Good News in believers, enabling a life that is truly free from the tyranny of sin (Danny, 2008).

This dimension of liberation from sin and death has a profound spiritual impact. Believers experience inner freedom, freed from the accusations of the devil and from the bondage of sin that once ruled them (cf. Rom. 6:14). Spiritual death caused by sin has been replaced by new life in the Spirit (cf. Eph. 2:1,5). One of the tangible fruits is the presence of God's *shalom* in the heart: a peace that comes from a restored relationship with God. The "law of the Spirit of life" works like "the spirit of life in Christ" that enlivens the conscience and directs desires toward things that are pleasing to God, in contrast to the "law of sin" that once ensnared people in despair (Romans 7:24-25). Therefore, life without condemnation is not life without rules, but life under new rules, namely the guidance of the Spirit that sets us free. At this stage, character transformation begins to take place: people who were once ruled by sin can now, by the Spirit, produce the fruit of righteousness. In an ethical context, this liberation by the Spirit leads to gratitude and moral responsibility, not to obtain a status of righteousness, but as a consequence of the gift of liberation that has been received.

The Law of the Spirit as a New Paradigm (Romans 8:2)

The phrase "law of the Spirit" in verse 2 above implies a completely new paradigm of life for believers. The old paradigm is living under the "law of sin," which can be associated with human existence under the Torah without the power of renewal, resulting only in transgression and death (Romans 7:5, 9-11). The new paradigm is living under the rule of the Holy Spirit, where God's demands are fulfilled not by the power of the flesh, but by the work of the Spirit from within. With the coming of the Spirit, God's way of leading His people shifted from external law (written on stone tablets) to internal law written on the heart (2 Corinthians 3:3). Paul emphasizes this difference elsewhere: *"The letter (written law) kills, but the Spirit gives life"* (2 Corinthians 3:6). This means that legal rules alone, no matter how holy and good they are, are powerless to produce true obedience because of the weakness of sinful humanity. It takes the internal spiritual power of the Holy Spirit to enliven the heart so that God's will can be obeyed with joy.

This paradigm of living in the Spirit is also referred to as living "according to the Spirit" (the word "Spirit" in Romans 8 often refers to the Holy Spirit, repeated 19 times in this chapter) (Danny, 2008). Living according to the Spirit means that a person's mindset, values, and actions are now controlled by the Holy Spirit. Christian ethics become pneumatological in nature, no longer merely juridical. In Galatians 5:18, Paul writes, "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." This shows that the guidance of the Spirit replaces the regime of the Law as the authority in the life of believers. Of course, this does not mean that the Law is morally invalidated, but rather that its fulfillment now occurs in a different way, not by human effort, but by the work of the Spirit within. Douglas Moo, for example, interprets the "law of the Spirit" in Romans 8:2 as "the rule exercised by the Holy Spirit": that is, the rule of the Spirit who has the power to free believers from the powers of the old age (sin and death) and from the accompanying condemnation (Danny, 2008). Thus, the "law of the

Spirit" can be understood as God's way of ruling His people through His own Spirit within them, replacing the role of the Law of Moses as an external guide.

The consequences of this new paradigm are significant. First, there is a change in motivation and source of strength in obedience. Believers now obey God not primarily because of external pressure or fear of punishment, but because of the Holy Spirit's prompting in their hearts, which instills love for God and others (cf. Rom. 5:5). The Holy Spirit awakens a new desire to do God's will, so that obedience becomes an expression of gratitude and a new nature, not an imposed burden. Second, there is a transformation of identity: from "fleshly man" bound by weakness and sinful tendencies, to "spiritual man" living in the power of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 8:9). John Stott says that the essential difference here is between the weakness of the law versus the power of the Spirit: the law of Moses is powerless to help because it is "weakened by the flesh," while the Holy Spirit has the power to free us now from "the law of sin and death" and guarantee eternal glory in the end (Danny, 2008). Therefore, the Christian life is essentially a life in the Spirit characterized by divine animation, motivation, and maintenance in every aspect (Danny, 2008). It is a life centered on a relationship with God through His Spirit, not merely on formalistic obedience. This new paradigm allows for the formation of a living evangelical ethic: love, joy, peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) become a moral foundation that transcends the minimum requirements of written law. Thus, the "law of the Spirit" as a new paradigm reveals the superiority of the new covenant: what God requires, He Himself fulfills in us through the presence of His Spirit.

The Inadequacy of the Law and God's Intervention through His Son (Romans 8:3)

Verse 3 explains God's steps in resolving the problems that the Law could not solve. Paul states: "For what the Law could not do, because it was powerless through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3, NIV). There are two main parts here: (1) the weakness of the Law, and (2) God's intervention through the sending of His Son.

1. The weakness of the Law

The Law was given by God and is holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12). However, the Law cannot produce righteousness in humans who have fallen into sin. The problem lies in the "flesh," that is, the weak and sinful nature of humans. The Law can command what is good but cannot give the power to carry it out. Like a thermometer that can show a fever but cannot cure it, so the Law reveals sin but cannot free humans from the power of sin (Danny, 2008). Paul experienced this reality: "For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). The failure of the Torah is not because of a flaw in the Torah itself, but because sinful humans are unable to fulfill it. Therefore, if God's plan stopped at giving the Torah, the result would be that *no one is righteous*, no one is justified by doing the law (Romans 3:20). The Torah is powerless to save; divine initiative beyond human ability is needed.

2. God's intervention through His Son

What is impossible for the law to achieve, "God has done," this is the essence of the Gospel. God acts unilaterally by grace: He sends His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. The phrase "in the likeness of sinful flesh" affirms the reality of the incarnation: the Son of God truly became human, entering into solidarity with sinful humanity, even though He Himself was without sin. Paul is careful to say "*the likeness of sinful flesh*,"

meaning that Jesus had flesh just like ours (truly human with all human weaknesses), but at the same time without sin (He was not "sinful flesh" but "like" sinful flesh) (Danny, 2008). In His human state, Jesus was sent "for sin" (Greek: *peri hamartias*), a technical expression that refers to the sin offering in the Jewish sacrificial system (cf. Lev. 16:15-16) (Danny, 2008). In other words, Jesus came as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of mankind.

On the cross, God "has punished sin in the flesh." The punishment referred to here is God's punishment for sin, which was inflicted on Jesus in His physical body. Sin, as a force that binds humanity, was finally condemned through Christ's sacrifice; sin was cursed and its rights over believers were abolished. Legally, this means redemption: the punishment that should have fallen on us was transferred to Christ (Isaiah 53:5 - "the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him"). Morally, this also means the conquest of the power of sin: through Christ's death, the power of sin lost its foothold to control those who are united with Christ. God "cursed sin in the flesh" of Christ, so that a paradox occurs: those who are in Christ are free from the curse. God's action surpasses anything the law could do: on the cross, God's love and justice meet, fulfilling the Torah's demand for punishment for sin while saving sinners.

This section highlights how central God's initiative is to salvation. Without the sending of the Son, the fate of humanity under the Law was simply death. But God did not allow that to happen: He took decisive action in history by sending His own Son. The expression "His own Son" describes the relational closeness within the Trinity, emphasizing the great price God paid to redeem humanity. N. T. Wright calls the phrase "God sent His Son" four words that summarize salvation: the initiative comes from God, the source and center of reality is no longer human effort but God's love (Danny, 2008). God entered the arena of human struggle personally in the person of Jesus, doing what the Law or human achievements could not do. This act of salvation also

prepared the way for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: through Christ's redemption, humans who were once defiled by sin can now become holy temples of the Holy Spirit. Thus, God's intervention through His Son opens the way for the age of the Spirit, an age in which God's law is fulfilled in a new way, as will be explained in verse 4.

Fulfilling the Requirements of the Law through Life by the Spirit (Romans 8:4)

Verse 4 states the ultimate purpose of God's action: "*that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*" The phrase "the righteous requirements of the law" (Greek *dikaionomai*) refers to the righteous demands or will of the law. This includes the entire moral demands of the Law, the essence of which is to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40, Romans 13:8-10). The question is: how are these "demands of the law" fulfilled in believers?

There are two main theological interpretations. First, the imputative interpretation represented by Calvin (2008) and the Reformation tradition: the fulfillment of the demands of the Law occurs by status, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers. Calvin (2008) argues that believers, while living in the world, cannot possibly fulfill the demands of the Law perfectly by their own deeds, because sinful nature still clings to them (Clark, 2014). Thus, the expression "fulfilled in us" refers to the fact that *the righteousness of the Law has been fully fulfilled in the flesh of Christ*, and because we are united with Christ (by the bond of the Holy Spirit), that fulfillment is counted as if it were ours (Clark, 2014). In this view, Christ is the one who fully fulfills the demands of the law through His perfect obedience and his perfect sacrifice, and believers enjoy a righteous status before God because they are "in Christ." Calvin adds that Paul mentions the existence of the Spirit ("who does not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit") not to declare that we can be perfect, but to emphasize that salvation by grace does not

encourage a life of sin, but is accompanied by the renewal of life by the Spirit (Clark, 2014). So, even though fulfillment is essentially the work of Christ credited to us, the Holy Spirit who dwells in us ensures that believers do not abuse grace, but begin to be transformed toward righteous living.

Second, the transformative interpretation widely held by contemporary theologians and interpreters: "fulfilled in us" means that through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can *truly* fulfill the moral demands of the Law in their lives, even if not absolutely perfectly. The emphasis here is on the qualifying words: "in us who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." The fulfillment of the law's demands occurs *in* believers as long as they live led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit sanctifies and guides in such a way that the commandment of the Torah, which is essentially to love, is carried out by believers from a sincere heart. Paul himself writes in Romans 13:10, "Love is the fulfillment of the law." This indicates that when the Spirit pours God's love into our hearts (Rom. 5:5), we are enabled to love and thus fulfill the deepest purpose of the law. Similarly, Galatians 5:22-23 mentions the fruits of the Spirit such as love, patience, and self-control, and Paul affirms that "there is no law against such things." This implies that living by the Spirit will produce character and behavior that are in harmony with God's law. In other words, the Holy Spirit writes the law on our hearts and helps us to carry it out. Unlike the first interpretation, this view sees Romans 8:4 as a promise of present transformation: God desires not only legal righteousness, but also the practice of true righteousness in the lives of His people. Although total perfection will only be achieved in future glory, from now on the "demands of the law," such as integrity, justice, and love, are increasingly realized in believers who live by the Spirit.

The two interpretations above are not actually in sharp contrast to each other, but rather highlight different aspects of the work of salvation. God through Christ has ensured the legal basis that the demands of the Law are fulfilled (the aspect of justification), and through the Holy Spirit He ensures the internal reality that His people are renewed to do His will (the aspect of sanctification). In Romans 8:4, Paul seems to deliberately leave room for both dimensions: the mention of Christ's work is implied in "fulfilled" (the passive verb indicates God/Christ as the implicit agent), while the requirement to "live according to the Spirit" highlights the role of human participation under the power of the Spirit in the process of glorifying the truth.

From a practical ethical perspective, this verse affirms that living by the Holy Spirit is the key to fulfilling God's standards of righteousness. After being justified without our own efforts (through the work of Christ), we are called to walk in the Spirit so that God's will may be done in our lives. This rejects both legalism (trying to fulfill the law by our own strength) and antinomianism (ignoring the law because we feel we are "under grace" alone). Believers fulfill the law by the grace of the Spirit. By living in the Spirit every day, relying on His guidance in decisions, His strength in resisting temptation, and His comfort in obedience, our behavior becomes more in line with God's law of love. The culmination of character transformation occurs here as the character of Christ is formed in us by the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). The characteristics such as holiness, justice, compassion, and generosity, which are required by the Law, increasingly shine forth in believers as they continue to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25).

Thus, the four dimensions of Romans 8:1-4 above describe a complete spiritual transformation under the reign of the Holy Spirit. Beginning with freedom from the penalty of sin and the power of death, the Holy Spirit brings believers into a new paradigm of life, enabling what was previously impossible under the law through the redemptive work of Christ, and ultimately resulting in a life that fulfills God's will. Practically speaking, this can be mapped out in several key spiritual outcomes:

1. Character transformation: a life that increasingly resembles Christ in holiness and love, as the fruit of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work;
2. Inner peace: peace of mind and assurance of acceptance by God, resulting from our "uncondemned" status and the presence of the Spirit who testifies that we are children of God;
3. Ethical guidance by the Holy Spirit: the ability to recognize and do what is right in our daily choices thanks to the Spirit's guidance in our conscience and understanding.

These three aspects are clear signs that the Holy Spirit reigns in the life of a believer and in the church community. Under the Spirit's guidance, God's demands are no longer a crushing burden, but a promise fulfilled in the joy of obedience.

CONCLUSION

The above study confirms that true Christian life cannot be separated from the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit. Through an analysis of Romans 8:1-4, four key dimensions of the "rule of the Holy Spirit" in believers are revealed: freedom from the penalty of sin, transition to a paradigm of living in the Spirit, God's redemption through His Son which opens the way to new life, and the fulfillment of God's will in the lives of believers led by the Spirit. All of these dimensions point to a single thread of complete spiritual transformation: God justifies and frees us through Christ, and then through His Spirit who dwells in us, He sanctifies and enables us to live according to His will.

The practical implications for Christians today, including those in Indonesian Pentecostal churches, are extensive. First, believers are called to live in joy without condemnation but with holy earnestness: knowing that the absence of condemnation does not lead us to complacency, but rather to gratitude and to offering holy lives in response to grace. Second, the emphasis on living according to the Spirit means that spiritual discipline, prayer, and sensitivity to the Spirit's leading become priorities in daily ethics and decision-making. The church needs to nurture the congregation to walk in the Spirit, listen to His voice through the Word, obey His promptings in the heart, and depend on His help to overcome temptation. This is especially relevant for the Pentecostal tradition, which strongly emphasizes the outpouring of the Spirit: charismatic experiences must be balanced with character formation and ethics driven by the Holy Spirit. The signs of the Spirit's mature presence are not only miracles or speaking in tongues, but above all the fruit of the Spirit that is evident in integrity, love, and holiness of life.

Third, the church as a community is called to surrender its leadership to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The structure and programs of the church are important, but they must not replace sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's direction. As we have been reminded, the church will lose its vitality if the Holy Spirit is marginalized. Therefore, both leaders and members of the congregation need to constantly seek the will of the Spirit in ministry, worship, and mission. In the context of the rapidly growing Pentecostal Church in Indonesia, this message confirms that true spiritual revival is measured not only by numbers or emotional expressions, but by the moral and spiritual transformation that takes place in the lives of the people.

Ultimately, Paul's theology in Romans 8:1-4 describes a Trinitarian and transformative Christian life: God the Father took the initiative of love by sending the Son, the Son redeemed and set us free, and the Holy Spirit brings that reality of victory into our lives every day. Building the reign of the Holy Spirit in our lives means submitting ourselves completely to the Holy Spirit's leadership as the Lord who reigns over us, allowing His word and promptings to shape us from within. The result is a life that glorifies God: a people who are justified, renewed, and led by the Holy Spirit will stand out in the world, living with integrity, love, and spiritual power that brings about the impact of God's Kingdom. This is the call for modern Christians in Indonesia: to become a community filled and moved by the Holy Spirit, so that the world can see Christ living in us through our transformed character and deeds.

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