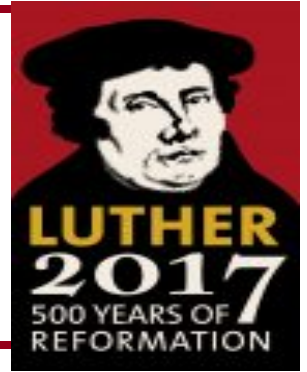


# The Holy Spirit & the Battle Within!

Matthew 4:1-11    Romans 7:7-25

February 12, 2017

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HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED TUG O' WAR? You know, you have long rope with two teams on each end and you try to pull the other team past a marked line? It is no longer just a school yard game -- it is now a worldwide sport with competition, federations, and world records! The battle can get so fierce that people have suffered severe injuries if they get tangled up in the rope or if the rope breaks. Tug O' War is an intense, worldwide sport!

Spiritually, there is a 'Tug o' War' within you. It is the constant tension between the Holy Spirit who dwells in you and your sinful nature. Your sinful nature is also referred to as the "flesh" and the "old Adam". It is the part of you that you were born with; it is the part of you that is **totally and thoroughly corrupt** because of Original Sin. The battle between the Holy Spirit and your sinful nature can be fierce and intense.

Today we continue our series on the Holy Spirit by looking at this battle within us; a battle that is very real; and it can have eternal consequences!

**This battle began when you were baptized, and gets more intense as you mature in the faith.**

When you were baptized, God the Holy Spirit came into your life and He now lives and dwells within you. **Your body is His**

Temple; He sanctifies you and sets you apart for holy living. Your life is “holy ground”, and it is lived out in God’s presence. *The Holy Spirit present in your life triggers a lifelong battle between your old sinful nature (the “old Adam”) and the Will of God.* It is a lifelong, spiritual “tug o’ war” within you.

#### BUT WHAT IS THE “OLD MAN”?

It is that which is born in us from Adam, angry, hateful, envious, unchaste, stingy, lazy, proud, yes, unbelieving, infected with all vices, and having by nature nothing good in it. Now, when we enter Christ’s kingdom, these things must daily decrease, that the longer we live we become more gentle, more patient, more humble, and the more and more free from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and pride. Large Catechism, Baptism, 66-67

Martin Luther described this struggle as being “**simultaneously sinner and saint**” (*simil iustus et peccator*). Through faith in Christ’s death and resurrection, God declares you holy and righteous: you are 100% **saint**. But yet, at the very same time, in this lifetime, you have to constantly battle your sinful nature: you’re “flesh”, the “old Adam” within you who is 100% **sinner**! **You are simultaneously a sinner and saint at the same time --- and that creates the battle!**

#### **This battle is actually a sign of faith!**

Unbelievers do not have this battle, because the Holy Spirit does not dwell in them. Unbelievers always follow their sinful nature; they are slaves to sin. **But you are not!** You have been set free from sin! You are not controlled by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit of God who dwells within you! And that creates the ‘Tug o War’ within you!

Here is how the Bible talks about it:

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. **They are in conflict with each other**, so that you do not do what you want. GALATIANS 5:17

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, **waging**

war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. ROMANS 7:21-23

This is the “Tug O War” of the Christian faith.

Thankfully, we are not helpless victims to the constant tension and battle within us! **The Lord Jesus Christ has given you the victory! He had delivered you! In His death and resurrection, He has defeated sin, death, and the devil. He has even overcome your own sinful nature – your “flesh”, the “Old Adam”.** It is not two equal opponents that are battling within you – the Old Adam is dead; it is crucified and buried with Christ; it is defeated; and it has NO POWER OVER YOU. **It only has power over you when you listen to it; when you obey its evil desires, and when you offer parts of your body to sin and evil.**

**You are to consider yourself dead to your sinful nature; and alive to God the Holy Spirit who lives within you!**

That’s how we are to live our lives:

**consider yourself dead to your sinful nature;  
and alive to God the Holy Spirit who lives within you!**

Not only does the Bible describe the “tug of war” within you, but it teaches you how to overcome and win the battle.

## BE LED BY THE SPIRIT

One way the Bible teaches you to fight the battle within you is to be “led by the Spirit.”

But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under law. Galatians 5:18

The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to lead you; He teaches you right and wrong, He guides you into God's Will and God's ways, and He directs you to live a godly life.

The battle starts in your heart, your mind, and your will. The word "led" means to guide and direct; to move and motivate. The Holy Spirit is at work within you to guide and direct, lead and motivate you. He teaches you in Holy Scripture what holy living looks like. He guides and directs you according to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit works through your heart, mind, will, and conscience to teach you what is right and wrong. The Holy Spirit works to strengthen you, to comfort you, and to assure you that you are a **forgiven** Child of God who **hears** and **obeys** God's Holy Word.

**The way to overcome your sinful nature  
is to be led by the Holy Spirit!**

There is an old saying that goes: ***"If you resist the Word of God, then you are resisting the Spirit of God"***. Don't let that happen to you. If you do resist the Word of God, then you will lose the battle. The Bible is clear: *Those who live according to the sinful nature will die. (Romans 8:13)*

One way that you fight the battle with your sinful nature is to be led by the Spirit: The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to teach, guide, and direct you to live a godly life.

**WALK IN THE SPIRIT**

A second way to battle your sinful nature is to “Walk in the Spirit”.

So I say, **walk in the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

GALATIANS 5:16

Walking in the Spirit in an external thing; it implies something outside of you; it’s how you live. It refers to your lifestyle; your words and actions. The word “**walk**” is used figuratively, “signifying the whole range of the activities of the individual life”. The tense of the word means that it is a **continual action**; walking in the Spirit is to be a habit in your life. Its self-discipline. Its self-control. You are to regulate your life and structure your thoughts around the Word of God! By the Holy Spirit at work through the Word of God, all areas of your life are holy and God pleasing.

In our Gospel lesson, we see Jesus being led by the Spirit and walking in the Spirit when He was tempted by the devil. Jesus turned to the Word of God, He knew it. He listened to it. He obeyed it.

**You are led by the same Holy Spirit and walk in His ways when you hear and obey the Word of God.** One of the most basic truths of the Christian faith is that the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God! The Holy Spirit works through God’s Holy Word to teach you how to “walk in the Spirit”.

The way to combat your sinful nature, and that “Tug o War” that happens within you, is to **listen and obey** the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you in Holy Scriptures.

When you listen and obey the Word of God, then you will not **gratify the desires of your sinful nature**.

When you listen and obey the Word of God, then you will be  
“led by the Spirit” and “walk” in His ways!

AMEN.

## Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." **4** Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' " **5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' " **7** Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' " **8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." **10** Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' " **11** Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

## Romans 7:7-25

**7** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." **8** But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. **9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. **10** The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. **11** For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. **12** So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. **13** Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. **14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. **15** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. **16** Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. **17** So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **18** For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. **19** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. **21** So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. **22** For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, **23** but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. **24** Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

## Invocation

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

C: **Amen!**

P: Thou Holy Spirit, Guide Divine,

C: Oh, cause the Word of Life to shine!

P: Teach us to know our God aright

C: And call Him Father with delight.

P: From every error keep us free;

C: Let none but Christ our Master be

P: That we in living faith abide,

C: In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

"Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!"

by Martin Luther, 1483-1546

The Lutheran Hymnal #224.2

## Confession/Absolution

P: Holy Spirit, God and Lord

C: We believe that you live within us through faith in Christ; but Lord we do hear and obey your Word. Rather, we listen to sin and obey its evil desires. Our sin is seen in all areas of our lives, and we are sorry. Lead us to repentance, faith, and holy living.

### SILENCE FOR MEDITATION

P: By the Call of the Holy Spirit through this congregation, I announce to you today that all of your sins are forgiven in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

C: **Amen!**



## **Collect**

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, we ask that you would lead us by your Holy Word, and empower us to walk in your ways as we live as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, in Who's name we pray, Amen.

## **730 prayer FIRST PARAGRAPH**

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, today we thank you for living within us. For faith in Jesus our Savior, we praise you. We ask that you will strengthen us in our battle against sin, and lead, guide and direct us. Holy Spirit, our desire is to walk in your ways as we are led by your Holy Word.

# The Holy Spirit & the Battle Within You!

Spiritually, there is a 'Tug o' War' within you. It is the constant tension between the Holy Spirit who dwells in you and your sinful nature. Today, we will see how to win that struggle!

1. This battle within you began when you were \_\_\_\_\_, and gets more intense as you mature in the faith.

2. You are simultaneously a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ at the same time --- and that creates the battle! ***This battle is actually a sign of faith!***

3. For the \_\_\_\_\_ desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in \_\_\_\_\_ with each other, so that you do not do what you want. Galatians 5:17

## **But what is the "old man"?**

*It is that which is born in us from Adam, angry, hateful, envious, unchaste, stingy, lazy, proud, yes, unbelieving, infected with all vices, and having by nature nothing good in it. Now, when we enter Christ's kingdom, these things must daily decrease, that the longer we live we become more gentle, more patient, more humble, and the more and more free from unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, and pride. Large Catechism, Baptism, 66-67*

4. Thankfully, we are not helpless \_\_\_\_\_ to the constant tension and battle within us! The Lord Jesus Christ has given you the \_\_\_\_\_!

5. But if you are \_\_\_\_\_ by the Spirit, you are not under law. Galatians 5:18

6. The Holy Spirit works through the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ to lead you; He teaches, guides, and directs you to live a godly life.

7. So I say, \_\_\_\_\_ in the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Galatians 5:16

8. Walking in the Spirit in an external thing; it implies something outside of you; it's how you live. It refers to your \_\_\_\_\_; your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_.

9. You are led by the Holy Spirit and walk in His ways when you \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God. ***That's how you combat your sinful nature!***

# BIBLE VERSE WORD SEARCH

W H K A A Q L C O I B T R L Q  
H H Q R T N O U K G I M R V S  
X X A E O N D N F R Z P A U N  
I H U T F B K F I N U B O K I  
T H E L G S A P Q G I A H W J  
N G I V T L S L I Q L S I R E  
R C O T H E R X Y U S T B T R  
T O I V E H C A E S H D C A S  
M N F T Y T O N U T T C D V I  
O T H U I B N D N E A D T T K  
I R G F C G R M W R K H Y N Y  
P A S E R I S E D U X O T A J  
G R O O O C G A E T U P A W E  
I Y F D K E G I N A F G A L Q  
W V G P V O L K P N A F Y U G

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Galatians 5:17

*(One letter words are not used, and if a word is used in the verse more than once, it is only in the puzzle one time.  
Words may be down, across, backward or diagonal and some words may overlap one another.)*



This logo takes many elements from Luther's seal, which is the most easily recognized symbol for Lutheranism. It was common in Luther's day for people to create a seal or coat of arms for their families, and that seal told the world what the family cared about or did for a living. It's no surprise, then, that Luther's seal was all about Jesus!

At the center of Luther's seal, and at the center of the Reformation 2017 logo, is a red heart in the middle of a white rose. (The heart and rose together are commonly referred to as Luther's rose.) As Luther explained in one of his writings, "The heart in the middle of white rose shows that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. It immediately sets [the believer] into the midst of a white, joyful rose, not like the peace and joy the world offers. That is why the rose should be white, not red. White is the color of the spirits and all angels."

At the center of that rose is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Jesus is the center and Rock of our faith. He has been since He came to Earth in the flesh, and He still is today. The word "still" bears witness to the ever and ongoing relevance of this one, saving truth for sinners.