

The Spirit of the Lord in us (Ezekiel 37:1-14; Romans 8:6-11)

Honestly, it seems like our flesh has a massive design flaw.

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Sometimes I weep at how fragile our human flesh is. We have fragile bones that break, fragile lungs that collapse, fragile hearts that miss a beat, fragile minds that freeze with age. Our fragile flesh propels us into selfish greed, succumbs to lust, fixates on wealth, drives us to narcissism or defensiveness or rage or self-harm. This year our fleshly proclivities have been on full display on the public stage, as “alternative facts” are celebrated and tax returns hidden, as cavalier groping is disregarded and flagrant dishonesty is touted as honorable.

Honestly, it seems like our flesh has a massive design flaw, like a car that deserves a manufacturer’s recall. Surely our maker must be tempted at times just to leave the heap by the side of the road and walk away. How many times do we expect to get rescued, to be towed back to the dealer?

But again and again, God intervenes for our well-being. Our manufacturer has made a promise to us: God will keep the body, but put in a new engine. That’s what I make of the promise in Ezekiel: “‘I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act,’ says the Lord.”

What does it look like to have the Spirit of the Lord within us? The only perfect model for us is Jesus Christ. In Romans it is his Spirit that promises to reboot our

flawed being: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.” If we really rely on the Spirit of Christ to guide our decisions and propel us forward, then it will override the flaws of the flesh.

I don’t know anyone who does this perfectly, but I’ve seen people who come close. It is a marvel to watch: self-control that serves the larger good, compassion that weeps with those who weep, perseverance that stays to the very end, humility that no human ego can produce.

I want to be like Jesus. But the only way I have a remote chance of coming near that hope is to stop pretending I can fix myself. The only way to re-boot is to acknowledge the design flaw in my sorry self--and pray that the one who made me hasn’t given up on me yet.